



often seem to be standing before one another in an attitude of expectancy, each waiting for the other to make the first overture, each afraid of losing prestige and being placed in the position of a suppliant.

At social gatherings, lack of etiquette produces a similar atmosphere of strained uncertainty, no man knowing what role he is supposed to be playing nor what next to expect of his neighbour. The tone of the assembly is apt to be awkward, informal, odd, abrupt. Our mistrust of each other is evidenced at every turn, and more particularly in the fact that people approach each other in a critical and negative spirit and are apt to dislike a new acquaintance for fear of being themselves disliked. In place of that reciprocity of admiration which earlier centuries cultivated—it is instructive to turn again to La Rochefoucauld on this point—there exists an atmosphere of general denigration which is destructive of social relationships. One notices, in fact, a double tendency in our social life. While the craving for mutual support fosters gregariousness and a spirit of undue servility to the opinion of the group, mistrust of others fosters an undue spirit of self-assertion. Modern man alternates between these two poles. As a “good mixer”, he seems to lack a sense of dignity and reserve; as an “individualist” he is apt to flout the conventions and to assert himself almost in defiance of what others may think of him. In place of distinctive personalities playing a role according to established conventions, we have a social life which is both formlessly anarchic and severely constrained.

Style, whether in life or art, is not something apart from content. One cannot behave in a certain way without thinking in that way, just as, to use Bagehot's analogy, one cannot write Addison's style without insensibly coming to hold Addison's ideas. Conversely, if we wish to think differently, the simplest method of arriving at our end is to act differently. The heroic pose produces the heroic thought as easily as the heroic thought gives rise to the heroic pose. This is well understood in the Army—or was until recently—where the fine scarlet uniform and the training in drill and smartness were used to put spirit into a man. The individual inevitably takes his standards from the life about him. He is not educated by abstract principles so much as by the suggestions which the objects and persons of the environment present to his mind. He is either upheld by the spirit of the

# MAN'S QUEST FOR SIGNIFICANCE

*by Lewis Way*  
ADLER'S PLACE IN PSYCHOLOGY

# MAN'S QUEST FOR SIGNIFICANCE

by  
LEWIS WAY

GEORGE ALLEN & UNWIN LTD  
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## PREFACE

IT IS HARDLY possible to discuss social questions without the help of psychology. In order to say what society is or what it ought to be, we must first hold some view of human nature and its fundamental strivings. The theories of Hobbes, for instance, are based on his belief that men strive for power, and those of Bentham on his belief that they strive for pleasure. Among the moderns, Adler and Freud are the scientific representatives of these two traditions of thought.

While there have been numerous attempts to apply the pleasure-psychology to our social problems, the Adlerian standpoint seems to have been curiously neglected. Let me hasten to say that, although Adler's influence is paramount in the present book, neither his name nor his particular set of scientific terms figure greatly in the text, and no attempt has been made to represent what might have been his personal views on social questions. Adler's psychology was designed with special reference to the neurotic patient, and it ought not to be applied wholesale. The Will to Power, especially, is true only of the neurotic, and it has always seemed to me that Hobbes, Nietzsche, Machiavelli and its other distinguished exponents overstate the matter when they try to make it fit a larger context. The concept of Significance, from which this book takes its title, is intended as the broader formulation required if Adler's psychology is to be made applicable to the normal man.

In a book of this sort one is always confronted with the problem of how to prove one's assertions. The methods of physical science are debarred to one by the nature of the subject matter; qualitative psychological changes cannot be weighed and measured, and theories concerning the behaviour of society cannot be verified by experiment. On the other hand, it is obvious that a society is something more than a mere agglomeration of accidental traits, components, anomalies and conflicting tendencies; it possesses, like the individual human being, like everything that lives and develops, a specific style or character. The task of the social psychologist is to grasp this character in such a

way that its apparently contradictory traits resolve themselves into a general pattern and their changes are seen as necessary developments of their interaction. The proof of his assertions will then lie in what Dilthey has called "the principle of coherence". His work will win the reader's conviction if he is able to take all the known facts, to show their consistency with each other, and to weave them into a story that will explain society's behaviour.

My warmest thanks are due to my friend, Mr. Glorney Bolton, for his help in preparing this book for publication.

THE AUTHOR.

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To  
E L S A

## PART I



## CHAPTER I

### THE DEGRADATION OF THE WORKER

#### *Why Do Men Work?*

THE RICHER our community becomes, the harder we all seem to work; the harder we work, the more we dream of a leisure society. It is the paradox of our time, which innumerable authors have pointed out.

Why are we afflicted by this mania for work? Not, surely, from any incapacity to produce sufficient for our needs, since the periodical crises in our economy are crises of over-production and our wars are wars to find markets for surplus goods. If we ask individuals why they work, most will answer that they do so in order to earn a living. But a moment's reflection will convince us that this is no sufficient answer. We can live at whatever standard we choose. We can live in a tub, like the cynic philosopher, should we find work too disagreeable. If we are cogs in a fantastic economic system, it is largely for psychological reasons.

Normally, human beings work because they derive psychological advantages from working. They gain a feeling of capability and self-dependence; they also gain a feeling of social approval and relatedness to others. Work establishes them as independent individuals while making them members of their community. In both these ways, it increases their psychological security, which is just as important to them as the economic security it also furnishes. That is why there are so few really idle people even among the rich. Everyone needs to justify his existence by making some contribution.

Sociologists, especially Weber in his celebrated essay,<sup>1</sup> have pointed out that our present insistence on work has historical roots. The sects of the Reformation repudiated the Catholic doctrine of the vanity of worldly activity. They did not believe that the best life was the life of cloistered prayer. On the contrary, they held that each man had been placed in his social

<sup>1</sup> *The Protestant Ethic and the Spirit of Capitalism*

He will be continually exploring new fields and will thus be acquiring an ever more pronounced confidence in the purpose and direction of his life. But naturally he also requires that the worth he gains in this way shall be confirmed by social recognition. Achievement which long remains unrecognized by others leads a person to doubt whether it has the value he imagines. Work must bring success, in the form of money, honours and reputation. What is wanted by the normal man is not, of course, success at any price or success for extraneous reasons; it must be success of a particular kind, of a kind that confirms the person's own evaluation of his capacities.

Obviously, there are many jobs which are vital to the welfare of society, but which could not possibly be expected to fulfil these individual requirements. Most jobs are too monotonous to afford a feeling of progress, too simple to test a person's capacities to the full, too degrading to raise his feeling of worth. Therefore one of the most fundamental problems facing any society is how to minimize the use of compulsion and to get these unpleasant jobs done with the least friction and discontent. One answer is to create an ideal, such as "Work for the glory of God" or "for the good of humanity", which, as long as it is believed, will make even the most menial tasks seem a valuable contribution. Another answer is the class-structure.

The most important function of the class-structure is to limit the education, expectations and general development of the individual so that he will be content with the forms of achievement available. It also, of course, creates a small, privileged class at the top, with the double function of maintaining the hierarchy and of bringing to life those cultural ideals and spiritual values which give labour its value. Let us look, for an example, at the aristocratic society which preceded the present one. We find at the top a small class of men who, if they were to represent the highest of which the culture was capable, had to have almost unlimited opportunities to develop their personalities. The role of the aristocrat, his duty in life, was, by living grandly and ostentatiously, by building palaces, by wearing sumptuous clothes and by surrounding himself with dependents, to dazzle those of inferior rank and to convince them of his power and worth. Every care was taken in his education to train him in the arts of ruling and leading. No work was permitted him, save certain honorary occupations, cultural pur-

suits and those feats of physical skill and daring which impress the multitude and train his own character. Any other work would have implied a lowering of his status, a betrayal of his class, and an abandonment of his prerogatives. Work, for him, would have been a sign of decadence, since it was assumed that a man born to rule would want to rule unless he were a weakling and lacking in virility.

If it were a disgrace to step lower than one was born, to wish to step higher was the greatest of all ancient offences—presumption. It was the odious, tasteless presumption of Monsieur Jourdain in wishing to improve his culture which Molière ridiculed, just as it was still in the twentieth century the presumption of miners in wishing to have pianos in their cottages which offended our Jourdains. Not to be contented with one's station in life, to have pretensions or to ape the manners of one's betters was, above all, "bad taste". These ideas were so strongly enforced that, with the aid of Christian precepts concerning the divine appointment of the secular order, they succeeded in maintaining a series of rights which, on the whole, nobody wished to molest. The lowest classes, the peasants and serfs, were severely limited in their self-development, but they were not in general frustrated. Their individuality was kept at a standard low enough for them not to conceive themselves capable of any worthier occupation. It was actually the existence of their so-called "oppressors", the aristocrats, which gave them their compensation and endowed their labours with value. The more the master was glorious, the more did they feel the reflection of this glory in their own lives.

In an age of equality one is naturally sceptical of such feelings. Yet this elevation of the self through identification with another has been of lasting importance in all religious and social psychology, and is the basis of all paternal rule. The labourer, under such circumstances, expects the squire to exercise authority, and the servant does all he can to enhance the prestige of the master. Gentle, humanitarian rulers, who place themselves on a level with those whom they are supposed to command, do not win respect, but outrage the feelings of their servants. To the poor and downtrodden, the aristocrat embodies the cultural and other values which are created by their toil. He gives meaning and glamour to their existence, he is the work of art which they have sacrificed themselves to create.

Just as the duke's tailor congratulates himself on seeing the coat he has cut carried on so distinguished a back, so, in general, an aristocracy does honour to all those who are forced to dress it, wait on it, build for it, paint, write and make music for it.

The preservation of the aristocratic régime depended upon the fact that the yield from the soil, on which the nobles and their retainers lived, scarcely varied from year to year, while, in industry, the craftsman took exactly the same time to perform each similar task. But with the introduction of machinery, each industrial operation took a shorter time, so that prices changed continuously, the balance between agriculture and industry was upset, and the political relationship between the classes altered. The whole economy was thus thrown from a stationary state into one of permanent flux.

The natural, indeed the inevitable ideal in such circumstances was that of Progress—progress for society in ameliorating conditions and in eliminating the more unpleasant and monotonous forms of work, progress for each individual in the shape of increasing gain in money and social esteem. New opportunities rendered the old class-structure unnecessary. Men were proclaimed free and equal. It was not, of course, implied that each was equal in natural endowment, but that each was politically equal, and free—unhampered by the old system of privilege—to choose that work which realized his maximum capacities. In such a society each man would rise or sink to his natural level, and, since each would be doing the work for which he would be most fitted, frustration would be at an end.

This was promising rather much. The theory on which it was based was really visualizing the “perfect society”, capable of finding space for each person's unlimited development. This society was conceived as an aggregate of independent units, perfectly homogeneous and perfectly mobile, each free to bargain with the other on equal terms. It was a mathematician's dream. To-day, I think, we have learned the danger of promising terrestrial Paradises. In practice, the machine, however remarkable its results, produced nothing like the state of perfectibility which the imaginations of the philosophers had envisaged. Freedom was still limited by the fact that the world's work had to be done, the only persons to do it being those who had always done it. One may abolish privilege, but the machine has still to be stoked, and, even if matters are so arranged that

the stoker has the legal right to rise in the world, he cannot in fact do so unless there is another stoker to take his place.

Moreover, the machine was not used for the strictly social purpose of relieving the more menial and monotonous conditions of work. On the theory that each man's gain was a gain to the whole community it was run for private profit, and the production of the objects which earned this profit took precedence over the interests of the man who made them. Under the new dispensation, men were to be inundated with a vast abundance of objects—euphemistically termed “goods”—which, since they were ultimately the producers of them, only created conditions of work even more relentless than before. The system of production and exchange was accelerated, but man as worker did not benefit.

### *The Muddle over Wages*

As Henry George remarked in his introduction to *Progress and Poverty*, “to educate men who must be condemned to poverty is but to make them restive; to base on a state of the most glaring inequality political institutions under which men are theoretically equal is to stand a pyramid upon its apex”. The discrepancy between the expectations aroused and the lack of the means to satisfy them produced both the striving which led society to such swift advances and the discontent which was to render its progress so unstable. In consequence, the middle classes were driven to find an answer to this discontent in compulsion. This compulsion was not to be of the Hell-fire type of the Christian, nor of the type of legal servitude enforced under the military régime, but the self-acting, impersonal compulsion of economic necessity. Following out their theory to the bitter end, they argued that each man was free—to accept the work offered or to starve.

Here again the abstract nature of their reasoning ran counter to actual conditions. It would no doubt have been just for a man to have the alternative of working or starving in a society indeed as homogeneous as theory assumed. But growing inequalities of inherited wealth were producing a new class-structure which gave to some an economic, not to speak of an educational and social handicap. The idea that men were simple units in an equal society, each free to accept or to reject

the bargain offered by the other, was falsified from the start. One man, the employer, represented far more than a unit individual; he was a function in a whole organization and his bargaining power was strengthened by all the forces of which that organization could dispose. While refusal of work on the terms offered means starvation to the employee, to the employer it means only the loss of an easily replaceable workman.<sup>1</sup> Thus, in the new society, the worker found that he had only exchanged oppression by the noble for exploitation by the manufacturer.

Discontent in the nineteenth century was therefore to take on an economic form, because the compulsion latent in the system was of an economic character. It is not surprising if this has misled many writers into over-estimating the significance of economics. They seem to have assumed that wages, and wages alone, was the sole point at issue. Owing to the superior bargaining power of the employer, the worker was naturally forced to accept wages which were often inadequate, but the main problem was the lack of those opportunities for achievement which would have given every man a sense of fulfilment in his work. However, we have got into such a muddle nowadays over the question of wages that it will be well to look more closely at this point first, before we go on to consider other questions.

What are the alternative principles on which rewards for work done may be based? The confusion in our minds over this point is apparent when we hear it said that coal miners, for instance, should be better paid "because their work is so unpleasant", or that farmers should be better paid "because their work is so valuable". Each section of workers has its own reasons why it should receive more than others. Clearly, the argument that work should be rewarded according to the degree of its pleasantness or unpleasantness is an impossible one. Nobody is going to pay the Royal Academician less than the house painter because the house painter declares that he enjoys his work less. The other suggestion, that work should be rewarded according to its value to the community, can be countered by saying that all forms of work are interrelated and equally valuable.

The classical economists would answer the question by saying that wages should be determined by supply and demand. The farmers' remuneration increases if farmers are in short supply

<sup>1</sup> L. T. Hobhouse, *Democracy and Reaction*.

and decreases again to the old balance when a sufficient number of new recruits has been attracted into agriculture. But, like the rest of middle class theory, this would only be true in reference to an altogether free market and a perfectly homogeneous and mobile society. In actual fact, not only will the superior bargaining power of certain capitalist interests hinder the free movement of prices, but the whole society will instinctively react against any gross alteration of the farmer's remuneration, however justified according to the laws of supply and demand. It will be argued that a rise in wages will alter the status of the farmer, cause discontent among other workers, and upset social relations generally. Likewise the farmers, while claiming all to which they are entitled when their exchange-value is rising, will resist stubbornly any reduction in their remuneration when their exchange-value is lessened. They will argue that they have become accustomed to a higher standard of living and cannot now return to the conditions which they formerly accepted. Hence, the free movement of supply and demand is checked in both directions by social and class considerations.

There is also an opposite theory. It is based almost entirely on these class considerations. Its exponents would probably begin by asking if there is any real truth in the economist's proposition, now taken almost as axiomatic, that wages are offered as an inducement to work and measure in some way the value to society of the work performed. Is the King, for instance, rewarded according to the value of his services? Does the duke receive more than the dustman because the duke is more productive? In these cases, we see the survival of the ideas on which the older society was based. The King, of course, is not remunerated for his services, but he is assigned that amount of money necessary for the proper discharge of his functions. The duke and the dustman are likewise paid what it is necessary for each to be paid if he is to fulfil his allotted role in society. Wages, in this view, are not an inducement to work or a measure of the value of the work performed. They are not paid for the job, they are paid to the man. They do not vary with supply and demand but are fixed according to his status.

Wages can therefore be treated as one aspect of the question of liberty. Because he is paid more, the company director has the choice of walking to his office in the morning or taking a

taxi, whereas the clerk is constrained to walk. Every class-society is built upon a system of differential liberty, where each person, from the King downwards, is given that amount of legal privileges, prestige and worldly goods necessary for the discharge of his functions. The large reward, like the liberal education, expands individuality and fits the person for higher responsibilities. The small reward is proportionate to the lowness of the task and to the undeveloped needs of the individual. It checks individuality, prevents frustration, and, like the "correct" tip to the waiter, is actually to be desired in preference to something more extravagant.

These two conceptions of value are for ever coming into conflict with each other in the middle class world. What happens is that society is neither kept stable by the one point of view nor is it sufficiently mobile and homogeneous to realize all that the other demands. Rewards are at present allotted without rhyme or reason. The capitalist manages to pile up a fortune out of all proportion to his social responsibilities, the salary of the film star overtops that of the King, while, at the other end of the pole, exploitation depresses wages even below the bare subsistence level. Every alteration of the labour market unsettles social relationships. Every step forward or backward is bitterly contested and leads to rising political passion and class warfare. While perfect liberty is proclaimed, there really exists a sort of differential liberty which no longer corresponds with any one conception of social justice, but is arrived at by a confused mingling of fixed status and *laissez-faire*.

### *The Early Factory Conditions*

I maintain, however, that too much stress can be laid upon the wages problem. It is largely a *modus dicendi*, a convenient language in which the worker can express other, more inarticulate discontents. More important seem to be the changes in working conditions which accompanied the industrial revolution. The first of these was the alteration in the relationship between master and man. One of the merits of feudal-based society was that it shielded the worker from economic anxiety. Master and servant had mutual obligations, and if the servant was bound to work for his master, the master was bound to give the servant care and protection. The lower classes in general

therefore lacked the feeling of material insecurity. However monotonous their daily round, they did not have to ask where their daily bread was to come from nor whether they would find a roof under which to sleep the night.

They were likewise shielded from psychological insecurity. So long as the customs of the time were clear and vigorous—and we must always make our comparisons with the best that the system achieved and not with its state of decadence immediately before its collapse—they had their prescribed duties and knew their place in the scheme of things. If they had no initiative they had no responsibility. But when the worker was thrown from the well-understood order of rural life into the new industrial towns, he found that instead of clearly-prescribed duties he was required to think and to act for himself, that freedom entailed responsibility, and that what he gained in initiative he lost in protection. The new masters admitted no responsibility for his welfare. On their own philosophy they were but his equals. They would not even admit that others should help him, for any interference with strict *laissez-faire*, any State subvention of paupers or "misplaced" private charity tended to weaken the economic compulsion upon which the social order depended.

The inhumanities of the early days of industrialism need no mention here. Apart from their rigid theory, the employers showed themselves greedy, for it was a time when capital accumulation was vital to the further expansion of industry. Every new machine represented the result of thrift and sacrifice—"of postponement of our present consumption", as the capitalist said, "of appropriation of the surplus belonging to labour", as the socialist put it. For many reasons the worker resented this new exploitation more deeply than he had formerly resented oppression. Particularly he resented obeying a man who was not by nature, birth, or creed his superior, who could not be admired and who conferred no dignity upon the work. As Nietzsche has remarked: "Soldiers and their leaders have always a much higher mode of comportment towards each other than workmen and their employers. At present, at least, all militarily-established civilization still stands high above all so-called industrial civilization; the latter, in its present form, is in general the meanest mode of existence that has ever been. It is simply the law of necessity that operates here; people want to

live and have to sell themselves; but they despise him who exploits their necessity and *purchases* the workman. It is curious that the subjection to powerful, fear-inspiring and even dreadful individuals, to tyrants and leaders of armies, is not at all felt so painfully as the subjection to such undistinguished and uninteresting persons as the captains of industry. In the employer the workman usually sees a crafty, blood-sucking dog of a man, speculating on every necessity, whose name, form and character are altogether indifferent to him."<sup>1</sup> Where work is merely a mercenary bargain made under compulsion, it becomes a degradation, and ties of loyalty between master and man cannot be established.

While craftsmanship flourished, the hours of work may have been unregulated and long and the remuneration not always adequate, but man was very much his own master. He worked to his own time, he could take a holiday when he needed it, and his hours were always variegated with innumerable little incidents, with calls from customers, with the gossip of neighbours, or with errands here and there about the village. His occupation was carried on in the psychologically healthy surroundings of his own home. He lived in a local community, in which he held a unique position as the acknowledged master of his trade. He was the potter, the carpenter, the bootmaker, the blacksmith, who made his own bargains and stated his own terms, dealing with people whom he knew and by whom he was known. There was variety in his work, for every job was slightly different, and designed to fill one person's specific need. He could take pride in the quality of his craftsmanship and in his skill in achieving the desired effect. His working life, his social life, his home life were integrated together as parts of a single pattern. He had, in sum, independence, uniqueness, variety, and there could be no doubt as to the usefulness of his life or as to the meaning of the several tasks upon which he was engaged.<sup>2</sup>

Every aspect of these admirably human conditions was changed by the introduction of the factory system. Man was taken from his social and family environment and herded with an army of employees recruited from various sources. He lost that background of a stable and integrated environment which is necessary for complete social adjustment. He became a

<sup>1</sup> *The Joyful Wisdom*, p. 77. (Allen and Unwin Ed.)

<sup>2</sup> v, Austin Freeman: *Social Decay and Regeneration*.

“hand”, and his special uniqueness as the village carpenter or blacksmith was gone. His social status was lowered and his relation with his customers was severed. His jobs were no longer commissioned from him by persons who came to his door, but were laid down by the rules of the factory, ordered by some impersonal employer whom he perhaps never saw, and performed under the jealous scrutiny of a manager or foreman. To this degrading servitude was added the pitiless routine set by the machines. Hour after hour he was required to follow a mechanical series of operations, with none of those little interludes and relaxations which had formerly helped to enliven and split up his day.

The factory worker seldom saw the result of his labours. He was not present at the completion of the whole article, nor, in many cases, did he understand the various processes by which it was produced. Manufacturers, careful of their trade secrets, preferred that he should remain confined to that small part of the process on which he was immediately employed. He did not know what happened to the goods when finished, for whom they were destined, what needs they fulfilled, or what value they had. These conditions left him with no opportunity for taking an interest in his work. They gave him no creative outlet and no sense of pride and achievement. As a craftsman he had been responsible for what he did and had been required to exercise foresight, judgment and care as to choice of means. Under the factory system, these faculties, indispensable for the proper development of individuality, were never called into play. As a personality he was ignored; he was paid by the hour and not for the job; all that was asked of him was the hire for a certain number of hours of his arm or his leg, or of one finger and his two eyes.

It was long ago pointed out by Friedrich List that the phrase “division of labour”, invented by Adam Smith to characterize the methods of industry, is an inadequate description of what really takes place. We ought rather to speak of “the division and *integration* of labour”. The work which the single craftsman used to perform as a whole is split up by the machine into a series of components, each man specializes upon one component, and all these specialists must be assembled under a single roof where the finished article is integrated together. To speak only of the division of labour emphasizes the individualist side of the

matter while overlooking the equally important collectivist tendencies. Man was at the same time specialized and standardized. By endless repetition he learned to do one thing with a precision and efficiency which he had never had before, but the gain was made at the expense of his personality as a whole. His advance in skill was along a constantly narrowing path until his work at last reduced itself to dabbing at a bolt or a screw as it passed before him on a conveyor belt. Inside his speciality, he was a mere precision instrument, outside it he was helpless. He had lost that general handiness which belongs to the craftsman, and although the conditions of factory life trained him to make collective efforts, they stultified his personal initiative.

Not only were men integrated into factories, but factories of similar nature tended to be localized round their sources of power and raw materials, such as the iron and coal deposits, or wherever they could jointly draw upon a reservoir of labour. Urban areas were thus created whose whole population depended upon a single mode of occupation, where the variety and cultural advantages of ordinary civic life were not available, where no alternative employments were open to special talents, and where any decline in the prosperity of the local industry brought thousands to a state of helpless ruin. These towns had no civic centres. The workers were housed either in high, sordid tenements clustered round the walls of the factory, or, where land was cheaper, in miles of mean, two-storied dwellings, all hastily rigged by the speculator, often built back to back, often without water, sanitation or the most elementary conveniences. The picture needs no elaboration other than what is necessary to call it back to mind. "The factory", says one writer, "maintained the coercion of the prison, the enforced silence, the repetitive routine, the lockstep, the constant surveillance of the foreman or jailer; often enough a formidable prison wall would be around the structure too. And the new housing quarters, with their closely calculated number of cubic feet of air and square feet of window space, cut off from sight of grass or flowers by the dusty paved courts and the dustier streets, could not have been more adequately designed if the sole object of the building were punishment."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lewis Mumford: *The Culture of Cities*, p. 180.

*Individualism and Collectivism*

Such, then, were the working and living conditions which replaced the atmosphere of the village green. Work, from being an integral part of man's life, was becoming a living death. The hours spent at the job were a portion subtracted from his existence and handed over to the employer for the sake of being able to live the remainder as he chose. Thus there sprang up the hedonistic idea of work as the antithesis of all pleasure and satisfaction. Work was no longer for God, for the master, for the honour of the craft, for personal achievement, but was merely for the sake of earning money to do other things. Reinforced by the hedonism implicit in the individualist philosophy of the time, these conditions led to irresponsibility in regard to the quality of the work performed and to an entire disregard for the relationship between goods and social needs. From the employer's point of view, so long as the goods were sold their quality or their usefulness were immaterial considerations. From the worker's point of view, so long as he got paid he was indifferent to the type of job he was required to do. Work, torn out of its social context, offered no meaning and no goal. Naturally, the more the possibility of reaching any kind of achievement through his work was denied to man, the more he concentrated upon the only alternative method of acquiring some kind of personal uniqueness, that of outrivalling others. The exclusive preoccupation of modern times with success at any price is thus based upon the frustration of work as a means to achievement.

Work in the industrial age tended to become more abstract and unreal at the same time as it became more "personal" in its aims. Men who before were handling objects, moulding and creating forms out of matter, were put out of touch with the concrete and their attention was turned towards dealing with people and thinking in terms of triumph or defeat. They had a greater craving for social recognition, yet their strivings took on a more anti-social direction. Before the nineteenth century, one spoke of "emulation", later one hears only of "competition". The change is significant. One emulates the achievements of another, one competes with a rival for success. The first brings the quality of the two persons' performance into com-

parison, the second emphasizes the struggle for existence between them. Under competition, work is always a means to an end, never an end in itself.

The change from the concrete and social attitude towards work to the abstract and personal attitude was fostered by the nineteenth century superstition that competition is invariably beneficial, since it strengthens the stock by eliminating the unfit. The idea appeared in Spencer's *Social Statics* a whole decade before Darwin, and was used as an argument for complete *laissez-faire*, even to the extent of denying all State and charitable aid to the destitute. In spite of the fact that modern biologists take an opposite view, the superstition is hard to eradicate. Haldane distinguishes between two types of competition, "interspecific" and "intraspecific", or that between the species and the environment and that between the members of the species itself. The first type may produce variations beneficial to the species, but the second is in the long run seldom other than deleterious. Competition between members of the species diverts energy from dealing with the environment and can handicap the species after the manner of stags whose sexual rivalry leads to an exaggerated growth of the antlers.<sup>1</sup> "This conclusion," comments Huxley, "is of far-reaching importance. It disposes of the notion so assiduously rationalized by militarists in one way and by *laissez-faire* economists in another, that all men need to do to achieve further progressive evolution is to adopt the most thoroughgoing competition . . . but we know that the results of selection are by no means necessarily 'good', from the point of view either of the species or of the progressive evolution of life. They may be neutral, they may be a dangerous balance of useful and harmful, or they may be definitely deleterious."<sup>2</sup> Other writers have been equally emphatic in pointing out that evolution is morally neutral. It does not favour the "best" in our sense; it favours the microbe equally with man; it favours quantity as readily as quality; it can never guarantee that the most developed mentally and morally among individuals, races, or types will not be overwhelmed by an increase in the rate of reproduction among the less developed.

In the present case, competition has shown itself as "a

<sup>1</sup> Haldane: *The Causes of Evolution*.

<sup>2</sup> *Evolution: The Modern Synthesis* (1946), p. 485.

dangerous balance of useful and harmful". Society, of course, received a tremendous new impetus. But along with the release of initiative there was released a reckless individualism which led to moral and social anarchy. This is too obvious to-day to be worth dwelling on. What is perhaps less obvious is that it had an opposite effect, breeding such insecurity as to weaken independence, and, along with the working conditions already described, turning men into automatons. Men can be independent only when they feel a sense of achievement; if this is denied them, they become unduly sensitive to social opinion, and our present craving for success leads as directly to social conformity as it leads to anti-social individualism.

The mixture of anti-social egotism and social dependence which characterizes the modern mentality may be exemplified by certain attitudes towards their jobs which grew up among workers. While competition may have determined the more vigorous to succeed by any and every means, and thus provided society with a new class of hard-bitten exploiters, the vast, inert majority only became more humiliated and depressed. Deprived of initiative and responsibility for what they did, they took the weaker line of making a virtue out of their servitude, and refused to take any but a passively hostile part in social life. They proceeded with their work as slowly as they dared—"ca'cannily" in the modern phrase—and often with the secret intention of making whatever mistakes were possible. They worked blindly and mechanically, holding strictly to the letter of the orders they were given, and, if the work went wrong, they merely shrugged their shoulders and said that they had done what they were told. This surly passivity has always been exceptionally hard for the employer to meet. He dare not trust such a worker to use his own initiative. He must simplify his machinery and make conditions foolproof against mistakes. As a result, the worker's life is still further reduced to mechanization and routine. He is in a certain sense taken back under protection and spoon-fed by the employer. So far from producing initiative and enterprise, the result for most workers is a creeping dullness of mind, an apathetic acceptance of their destiny as ciphers, subservience of a passively hostile kind, and a type of behaviour which begs continual direction from authority.

*Standardization and Variety*

It may at least be countered that, if the conditions of work degraded man, he benefited by the rise in the standard of living. Marx had predicted that society would divide into two hostile camps of a smaller and richer set of exploiters and an ever more numerous and miserable multitude of the exploited. But on the whole the distribution of wealth among the classes seems to have remained almost unaltered. A few millionaires were indeed created, and the size of firms continued to grow as predicted, but since these firms were run on the joint-stock principle they were not any evidence of the concentration of wealth. On the contrary, a large petty bourgeois class arose, and property was distributed among an increasing number of medium-sized holdings. More people were possessed of a small fortune or a modest competence and all classes received a share of the benefits. Statistics show that the proportion of the industrial yield which went to labour and to capital respectively remained fairly steady throughout the century, so that the worker's position, while it did not improve relatively to that of other classes, improved absolutely.<sup>1</sup>

But once this has been conceded, we must ask what this increased flow of goods meant in terms of real satisfaction. The standard of living cannot be measured as a mere quantity. The substitution of twenty leaky tin kettles a year per head of population for one of solid iron lasting twenty years does not necessarily betoken an improvement, and the quality of the goods must also be taken into consideration.

Now the employer is by nature an *entrepreneur*, a financier, who looks only at the balance-sheet. He has as little interest in his public as he has in his workmen. He is not inspired by the idea of letting his machinery be used either for lessening the unpleasantness of work or for improving the quality of the goods to the consumer. The machinery is there to make him a profit, and many of the men who now control vast networks of factories have never seen the goods which these factories produce, and may hardly know even by hearsay in what they consist. The employer knows only that the greater the quantity of goods which he can produce, the greater will be his return on the heavy initial cost which he has incurred in

<sup>1</sup> v. Sorokin: *Social Mobility*.

installing the machinery. His interests therefore revolve wholly round the question of a larger turnover.<sup>1</sup>

In a competitive society which is not perfectly homogeneous, where, as to-day, the price of raw materials is more or less standardized and wages fixed by agreement for a whole trade, a debasement in the quality of the product is practically the only means by which one rival can gain an advantage over another. Given two firms of equal size and efficiency, for whom labour and other conditions are the same, if one can produce an article which looks much like that of its rival yet is slightly cheaper by virtue, say, of containing a lesser quantity of solid metal, it will attract a certain number of people who formerly could not afford to buy such articles. The firm's turnover will then be increased and its costings reduced. It can now gather those fresh resources of capital necessary for the expansion and modernization of its plant, and this extra lead in size and efficiency will be likely to put its competitor altogether out of the running. For now it will be in a position to lower its prices still further without any noticeable fresh debasement of quality, so that the difference between the prices of the two contending firms will be very much greater than is warranted by the difference between the qualities of their articles.

We see here both the good and the bad aspects of a capitalist economy. The customer will come to recognize, quite rightly, that the cheaper article is "better value for the money". It may certainly be a little inferior to its rival in quality, but then it is half the price. Competition thus brings the customer a greatly increasing number of goods at a price which diminishes more rapidly than their quality—an advantage which is not to be despised. But, on the other hand, the inferior article will, as in Gresham's Law, always tend to drive out the superior and usurp the whole market. Under competition, no firm can ordinarily afford to maintain its original standard of workmanship without fear of ruin. Sooner or later the line of goods in which it deals will be debased by a rival, and the process will continue as further rivals enter the field, who debase by a small fraction the level of quality maintained by the first. In this way the public is gradually educated to lower standards and is carried imperceptibly down a moving escalator of taste. Lured by the bait of "better value for the money", it soon forgets the first quality of

<sup>1</sup> v, Austin Freeman, op. cit.

the article for lack of comparison, later it forgets the second and the third qualities as it is presented with ever worse editions of the original wares.

If, under competition, there is a downward escalator of taste, it must always be remembered that there is also an upward escalator. The flood of new goods, while it has debased the best, has raised the standard of life of the lowest classes, and accustomed them to a new type of efficiency and precision in the instruments and utensils which they use. Where do these two escalators meet? The answer is—on the platform of the mediocre. But this, again, is not a stationary platform, but one which is itself always sinking. The tendency of industrial conditions is towards a democratic and slowly descending averageness in regard to the mass of consumers, and towards the growth of monopoly in regard to the manufacturers. While the small firm is constantly driven off the market by the large firm, individual differences and idiosyncracies of taste are ruled out from among the people. Under craftsmanship, articles were made to suit the taste of the individual consumer; under industrial conditions the consumer has to adapt himself to the goods on the market. The man of idiosyncratic taste, who formerly helped to raise the cultural level, is the natural enemy of the manufacturer, and, so far from being considered a social asset, he is considered, if he has any influence at all, a social nuisance. The widest extension of the market is only gained by eliminating variations of high and low, by raising and debasing until a uniform level is reached for everyone. Standardized goods mean standardized human beings both to produce and to consume them. The ideal of the system is the "economic man"—he whose cheap individualism makes him the perfect competitor, and whose standardized individuality makes him the perfect market.

Competition also breeds a type of variety which becomes ever more exaggerated, unintegrated and useless. It leads to every avenue being explored in the hope of finding fresh fields for enterprise, so that, while old firms are extending their operations and absorbing their competitors, new firms are always cropping up to occupy any little ecological niche which happens to have remained vacant. Again, there is no denying the value of all this inventiveness, ingenuity and variety, just as there is no reason to deplore standardization, when it is coupled

with good design and good workmanship. But as possibilities narrow, many of the new gadgets and variations become of doubtful value and we find firms competing against each other with products which are really similar, but packed in differently coloured cartons and claimed as unique. The manufacturer seeks to impress the customer by superficial additions and by "improvements" which are no improvements. To the plain and honest article he adds here a superfluous handle and there an extra strip of ornamentation, until taste becomes not only standardized but bastardized, ruined by the craze for novelty, new lines and cheap effects. Variations of this kind entail an enormous waste of effort in duplicating articles unnecessarily and in producing others which pamper and beguile the public for a brief moment and are then consigned to the dustbin. Goods end by being standardized where they should be varied and varied where with advantage they could be plain and standardized. Their lack of durability and their generally unsatisfying nature wastes human labour, from the labour which digs up the raw material to the labour which packs and distributes the finished article. The economy and efficiency which we owe to the system is thus balanced by a waste and inefficiency which become ever more appalling as the system moves to its climax.

Readers, I hope, will not have been confused by the number of trends which have to be discussed here simultaneously. For convenience, I will summarize them: in relation to production, there is a double tendency on the part alike of worker and employer towards anti-social individualism and collective conformity. In relation to consumption, there is a double tendency for goods to be both uselessly varied and over-standardized. In relation to social organization, there is a double tendency towards monopoly and the creation of an average mediocrity. Idealized, these three parallel double tendencies find expression in the great slogans of democracy—"liberty and equality". In fact, it is from these tendencies that the slogans derive much of their force; they form the economic basis of the modern social outlook.

### *The Second Phase*

For the sake of exposition, it may be well to divide the industrial era into two phases, although it developed as a complex

of tendencies originating out of each other and to which no certain date can be assigned. In the first phase the creed of unrestricted individualism was dominant, the atmosphere was one of progress and expansion, the State was distrusted, and a stern and narrow morality ruled. The second phase was marked by the growth of the State and of other institutions designed to check individualism, people became more collectively-minded, the morality was softened and humanized, and the atmosphere, as it approached our own time, grew to be imperceptibly one of disillusion and contraction. Each phase had its particular set of problems, those concerned with production and the abuses of the factory system being more prominent in the first, those concerned with the system of distribution in the second.

As the evils of the factory system became apparent, steps had to be taken to correct them. Child labour had to be controlled, the sweated industries regulated, protection given to women in industry. After the Reform Bill of 1832 control of the State passed altogether into the hands of the middle classes, whose jealousy of its interference—a jealousy which had led them to dismiss it almost as Engels talked of its "withering away"—began to abate, and the use of its powers to rectify abuses seemed less sacriligeous. Society was inevitably moving away from individualism, in this and in other ways. Men were learning, for instance, to take collective action on their own account. They were gradually overcoming the atomized condition which the disruption of their social ties and the need to compete together for jobs had occasioned, and were learning in the factory to appreciate the common nature of their interests. With the growth of the Trade Union movement we may fairly date the beginning of the end of the atomistic theory of society or, at least, its retirement into the universities and the libraries of economists. Man as a member of a Trade Union is something more than an individual unit; he has the whole power of his organization behind him. As soon as it becomes common for negotiations to be conducted between rival organizations rather than between the single employer and the single worker men come once more into functional relationship. Competition has then been transferred to the organizations which fight on their behalf, and with every further growth of Trades Unions, of Consumers' Co-operatives, of Employers' Federations, and of the State, the society conceived as a milling crowd of individuals

changes and gives place to a society conceived as a hierarchy of power-relationships, a hierarchy which, as we stand to-day, is still in process of sorting itself out.

In the sphere of industrial work, the tendencies already described still continued. We have seen that in the first stage of industry the worker acquired a new precision and skill, which replaced what had been lost under handicraft, but a precision and skill which swiftly led to a kind of automatism. However, once a certain point of simplification has been reached in the movements of the human automaton, it becomes possible to replace him by the real one. The mechanic whose skill has reached this point is then released for higher work, his place being always taken by the combined action of the machine and of the unskilled labour of those whom we now refer to as "dilutees". We must conceive this process as being repeated, not once, but over and over again in every class of work and throughout the century, until the whole industrial population is carried, escalator-fashion, to a higher standard. It does not mean that monotony is thereby relieved, for each task in turn grows monotonous at its level, but the work becomes lighter and the demand on the general intelligence greater. Nor does the industrial system lose any of its tendency to produce both inequality and standardization. As machinery becomes more automatic it tends to a certain uniformity of general principles. Machines are more elaborate, but their elaborations are only variations on a single character; they are all turning, punching, drilling, planing, milling machines, so arranged that they are capable of producing almost anything, from carpet-sweepers to canons. Their convertibility becomes greater—as we know from wartime experience—and the worker has to be rendered equally easily adaptable. Under craftsmanship, a wheelwright was not easily changed into a potter, but the machine does not demand this specialized skill. It must be served by a uniform and extremely mobile flow of labour which can be turned on as through a tap at whatever point it may be required. The barriers which formerly divided the crafts are broken down, and while a higher and higher class of technicians is created at one end of the scale, whose function it is to superintend the installations and general working of the machines, there is created at the other end an accumulating crowd of workers of only general capacities.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> v. Alfred Marshall: *Principles of Economics*, for some of these points.

*Over-production*

During the second half of the nineteenth century attention was shifting from making to marketing, from industrial to commercial problems. Swifter communications by road, rail and ship had to be devised to move up the heavier loads of raw material necessary to feed an expanding industry and to widen the range of distribution of the finished articles. Industry was coming to depend for its turnover upon the wide masses of the population. Instead of goods being made by the generality for an élite, they were made by the people for the people, and producer and consumer came together in the same man. This brought to the surface the modern problem of "over-production".

According to economic theory there can, of course, be no such problem as "over-production", since "wants are indefinitely extensible". But, in practice, as everyone knows, there comes a time when goods can no longer be sold at a price which covers the cost of making them, and a glut ensues. Why this should be so is the unsolved problem of modern economics, and there is scarcely anything a layman dare say upon the subject without fear of contradiction. If we look from the side of price, it is evident that, since the manufacturer depends for his profit chiefly upon turnover, the quantity of goods is ever increasing and the price ever falling. If we then look from the side of costs, it is equally clear that these must fall likewise, at a slightly faster rate, if they are to keep ahead of prices and the manufacturer is to make a profit. The manufacturer will be constrained to cut wages to the lowest possible figure, thereby limiting the purchasing power of the worker and contracting the market for his goods. Superficially at least, it looks as though the worker can never really buy back what he makes, as if producer and consumer never really can come together in the same person. In other words, the economic system as at present constituted is not a closed or stable system, but must always be developing dynamically in search of fresh customers.

All will go well with this system as long as these customers are forthcoming in sufficient quantity, and, during the greater part of the nineteenth century, England was very comfortably provided with oversea markets, in addition to receiving in

return for her goods an ample supply of cheap raw materials which enabled costs to be kept low. But once the industrial system took root in other countries, markets contracted, while at the same time the fall in the price of manufactured goods increased the cost of raw materials received in exchange. Moreover, as wages rose in backward countries towards the level prevalent in the home country, these raw materials became even more expensive. Markets contracted, costs rose, prices fell —this seems to be the crux of the problem which began to make its presence felt in all the more advanced countries from about 1870 onwards.

The fatality of this problem lies in the fact that it leads, not to a check, but to an acceleration of the dynamic competitive forces. All those tendencies to contradiction already described become more exaggerated. Each manufacturer, finding it more difficult to dispose of his goods at a price that will cover costs, eeks to increase his turnover in a way that leads to a fresh fall in prices, while at the same time cutting costs to the bone in a way that leads to a fresh fall in purchasing power. Increases in turnover mean elaboration of the processes of production, a higher rate of investment in capital equipment, and a great improvement in the efficiency of the machine. Labour is further diluted and the standard of technical and managerial efficiency is raised. At the same time; by cutting costs, goods become more standardized and debased in quality, and more useless variations are introduced to deceive the eye of the purchaser. The struggle between labour and capital over wages and dilution is intensified, and the size of their rival organizations grows as each side musters its full forces. The State, constrained to mediate between them, grows likewise. Firms move towards monopoly, the smaller ones disappearing from the competitive arena, and the Trades Unions move towards the "closed shop".

The whole society now appears to be keyed up to a higher pitch of tension. The demands made upon the individual for precision and efficiency at his job coupled with the competitive struggle for places with which he is faced breed in him a state of anxiety almost intolerable. This prevailing note of insecurity sharpens aggressive striving while it leads men to seek protection in collective forms of life. As the individual begins to see his significance reduced in comparison with the oppressive power of the great organizations he is brought to a fuller con-

sciousness of his economic helplessness. All these contradictions gather momentum until the social fabric begins to rock more dramatically. Each glut, being based on a higher industrial efficiency, involves a greater destruction of surpluses and writing down of capital, ruins more investors and throws more workers out of employment; each recovery soars upwards to new and more precarious heights. The individual, no longer master of his fate, feels himself whirled about as by a social maelstrom.

In our time, an alternative method of meeting the problem of over-production has been evolved, that of artificially maintaining purchasing power. The incompatibility of reducing the worker to poverty and at the same time of expecting him to furnish a market has at least been dimly realized. The modern financier or industrialist is certainly more humanitarian than his forefathers. He repudiates a policy of exploitation and urges shorter hours and higher wages upon his less enlightened colleagues. But he will also tell you that the worker has not been given more money in order to hoard it; he is expected to spend it for the benefit of industry. Except in time of war and its aftermath, when saving helps to ward off inflation, spending has now become a social duty. From the point of view of modern industry any little savings which the individual could put by are negligible and capital accumulation has become the affair of large concerns. The individual's duty is to pump life into the dying system by spending more in order to enable industry to meet its problems of over-production.

Few pause to consider the sinister absurdity of this reversal of roles between producer and consumer. They see nothing strange in the fact that goods should be made, not to satisfy needs, but to keep everybody hard at work. Political parties before the war issued manifestoes on the various devices by which they proposed to raise purchasing power and thus to abolish unemployment. They did not ask where this constant "revving up" of the system was leading. To stave off slumps and unemployment everybody must work harder to earn more money to buy more goods to send up production, which again brings on the need to spend more to earn more to work more in a never-ending circle. Before the war the market was flooded with goods which represented less and less intrinsic value, "put across" on the public by every sort of allurement and moral

suasion. We had cleaning mixtures, cough mixtures, mayonnaise mixtures, and mixtures of every conceivable kind, produced according to practically identical formulæ and put into differently shaped tins and bottles to be sold against one another. Every one of these products could with advantage have been standardized, raised in respect of quality, and sold in a limited number of sizes which answered the consumer's convenience.

It has often been remarked that all the boots and shoes needed by the whole population of these islands could now be produced by a single factory working at full capacity. This is true of nearly every other article of common consumption. Against this background of supreme industrial efficiency it would be possible in normal times to realize the dream of a leisure society. But the very fact that this leisure society is admittedly realizable is proof that the work upon which nine-tenths of the population is engaged is a total waste of time. It is work devoted to producing goods whose main recommendation is that they shall deteriorate as quickly as possible in order that more goods may be produced and more work undertaken, with the result that our lives are wasted in drudgery and the raw materials of the earth are used up at a thundering rate. We are all the time occupied with baling out against this inundation of boots and shoes and kettles and refrigerators and bottles of cough mixture beside which the deluge of water sent by God was a small affair.

As the system gains in complexity and contradiction it requires an ever-increasing army of middlemen, bureaucrats, and others to prevent it from falling to pieces. The growth of advertising as a skilled profession is one example of the manner in which thousands of potentially useful citizens have to be employed on the task of disposing of goods which, without their efforts, would never have been needed. The number of people employable in actual production diminishes in proportion to the number required as go-betweens and adjustors of discrepancies. This leads to a new outbreak of variation in the distributive trades and to the growth of that supernumerary class, the lower middle, or petty bourgeois, whose importance was not foreseen by Marxian critics, but which was destined to play such a leading part in the type of pre-war politics arising out of the slumps and inflations which perpetually ruined and re-

created it. If one now walks down the high street of any urban centre and counts the number of retailers of all sorts existing within a measured distance of, say, half a mile of each other, one will surely be staggered by the result. Butchers, bakers, grocers, fishmongers, confectioners, tobacconists, are there in tropical profusion. Each of these concerns requires its separate maintenance, with its principles, assistants, buyers, cleaners, messengers—a large staff when totalled, and a whole population when multiplied by the number of shops in the street. Let us now enter these shops and we shall find that each stocks the same goods, even to the same brand of goods, as its neighbour a hundred yards down the road. There is no question that this multiplication serves to furnish the customer with any valuable variety. Except for dealers in perishable foodstuffs, who probably cut up and prepare their goods for sale, and who exercise a certain choice on the customers' behalf when they stock their shops from the central markets, most of these shopkeepers have nothing to do but to hand branded, price-labelled, pre-packed commodities across the counter.

The existence of this diversity is of course again due to the fact that the capacity of modern industry is so enormous that it needs to carry a weight like Atlas to prevent it from running wild. If it is true that we live under the constant threat of over-production, then it stands to reason that there are too many potential producers. The parasitic nature of the majority of the population is essential in such circumstances. Just as it is necessary to pay people higher wages in order that they shall buy more of the things they do not need, so it is necessary to reduce people to fictitious occupations in order to achieve a surplus of consumers over producers. Yet here again the process is self-defeating, for consumption still sends up production and forces more consumption. It is not surprising, therefore, if even the maintenance of the majority of the people in useless activity, the efforts to lower the quality of the goods so that they shall deteriorate quickly, the suppression of inventions, the quota restrictions placed upon raw materials, the ploughing back of crops, the dumping of goods in foreign countries, and all the other pre-war devices were insufficient to control the terrible plethora, and that unemployment continued to increase among those unfortunates who could not find even something useless to do.

*The Ideal Dissolves*

The ideal which industrial democracy set before people was the ideal of material progress, which, while it was believed, gave each individual the feeling that his particular contribution marked a step forward towards a better world for himself and his heirs. Yet, when it came to the point, the individual found himself considered as a mere commodity in the labour market while the work he was hired to perform degraded him to the level of a tool. As the general uselessness to which the economic system led became apparent, the ideal of progress lost its last justification. Work offered the individual neither the feeling that he was achieving personal fulfilment nor that he was contributing to any visible social end. Even the goods which he received in such quantity failed to give him real satisfaction. While statistically there was a rise in the standard of living, while there were certainly more household gadgets, more cinemas, more drains, there was a seeming contraction in the abundance and a debasement in the quality of the things which really count. As industrial prices fell, agricultural prices rose by comparison, and the necessities of life became relatively expensive. Indeed, in a heavily mechanized country like Great Britain, subsidies have to be resorted to if agricultural goods are to be available at anything like a reasonable figure. The modern man knows nothing of that superfluity and richness of quality in simple things which characterized the life of the eighteenth century.

Even our amusements fail to give real satisfaction. The proper use of leisure requires effort to acquire or to achieve something, but the modern man, conditioned by his work to a passive and mechanical routine, begs from the machine a type of amusement which is passive and mechanical also. Such passive amusement is mere time-killing, and results in a vague sense of blankness and dissatisfaction. It destroys the capacity for creative effort, degrades self-respect, and leads both to enervation and restlessness. The whole output of the radio, the Press, and the film industries, by doing people's thinking, feeling and acting for them, transforms them into a weak and tractable mass, as imitative as their machines, who must be continually led, stimulated, talked to and placed under some external suggestion.

We have to realize the obscure and massive impact of all these conditions if we are to understand why the optimism with which the industrial era opened began to fade. If the modern man ever stops to ask himself why he works at all, naturally he can find no answer save that he does so in order to earn a living. In default of an ideal, society began to rely more and more upon the dread which each man felt at the thought of the gloomy millions of the unemployed. That men still tolerated such conditions was due to the anxious passivity which such conditions had induced. Unemployed men, for instance, seldom display much personal initiative, but are apt to fester slowly away in the conditions to which they have been condemned. Among those who still retained the privilege of earning a living, their economically dependent position, their lack of general self-sufficiency, their eternal gnawing sense of insecurity, the bewilderment they felt before the problems of their world, depressed their courage and personal initiative and caused them to look for relief to the great organizations. In these they now place their hope and for these they work, endowing them, especially the greatest of them, the State, with all the value and significance which has been drained out of their own lives.

But alongside this apathy and dependence, we find everywhere symptoms of the opposite state of mind. As the consciousness of weakness grew, the emphasis upon maintaining the threatened personality became more shrill. People nowadays may not dare to refuse categorically to work, but their touchiness is so great that they can no longer be brought willingly to obey. An independent person can receive an order from one qualified to give it without any impairment of his *amour-propre*; but the modern man, puffed up by mistaken notions of what are meant by liberty and equality, despising all masters, and uncertain of his own worth, considers any obedience as derogatory to his dignity. The servant can no longer be ordered, but must be persuaded and cajoled. So little can he bear even the appearance of subservience, that he must comfort himself with the thought that he works "only to oblige". In wartime he acquires a heightened self-importance by renaming his ordinary avocations his "war work" and, in general, he prefers to think of himself as working "for the nation" or "for the good of humanity" rather than for a personal master. When individualism reaches such a pitch that nobody will any longer obey a

personal master, and when the post-war shortage of labour removes the threat of unemployment then, again, the State alone has the prestige and power to step in and say what must be done.

### *Summary*

The nineteenth century produced a psychological revolution as profound as its political, industrial, agrarian and commercial revolutions. To the credit of this revolution can be set the fact that by means of political enfranchisement, of education, of technical training, the lot of humanity as a whole was raised and civilized to a new high level of mediocrity. Although many cultural values were blighted in the process, material progress was achieved on a prodigious scale. Conditions of work, although a greater tax on nervous energy, tended to become less physically arduous, and living conditions, although less satisfying, grew more refined. On the other hand, the revolution broke up the former organically-constituted society in favour of one in which individuals were theoretically treated as equal and indistinguishable units. By emancipating men from their social ties, their integration with their community was made more difficult for them; while by herding them together into towns and factories, their attainment of personal uniqueness was made more difficult. The later phase of over-production, by contracting social opportunities, accentuated the growth of competitive individualism and of collective tendencies. Man became both undisciplined and weak. At present he lives in a crowd, but he has no social integration; he insists on his rights, but he has not the independent and responsible character to use them when granted. We are, accordingly, no longer the material out of which a sane, well-ordered democratic society could be created.

The fundamental effect having thus been to emancipate, isolate, weaken and collectivise people, the natural result now is the growth of a new hierarchic order. Employers are indeed beginning at last to realize that the palmy days of carefree irresponsibility are over and that they must consider themselves answerable to society at large for their actions. They show signs of developing those qualities of foresight and leadership for which the scale of modern industry is an education. The finan-

cial integration of industry aids them in their plans to rationalize the processes of production and to eliminate the competitive anarchy for which our age of contracting opportunities no longer has a use. The vast resources of the monopolies gives them facilities for research and experimentation denied to the smaller firm, and offers the possibility of higher quality and proper standardization. This is coupled with a movement towards a truer variety. With the development of electrical power and of easy means of transport, industry need no longer be localized at the pithead, but can be spread throughout the country. The modern ingenious use of by-products creates a variety of subsidiary industries, with scope for all talents. A great monopoly of to-day, in fact, is as technically diversified as it is financially integrated.

The psychology of the masses likewise begins to move into line with the new tendencies. Out of all the anarchy, disorientation and anxiety to which the ordinary man has been subject for a century or more, there wells up in him a great desire to be taken once more under protection, to be released from the crushing burden of this individualism, to be told clearly what to do, and to be given a job worth the doing. The most important feature of the age is the craving for security—security against unemployment, security of home life, security for the State in foreign affairs, and, above all, the security of a settled direction, of belonging to a purposeful society, of having a known place in the scheme of things. Here, again, the State and the great organizations step in, promising to insure the individual from the cradle to the grave. Man is once more taken back under paternal authority, and the "perfect society" of free and independent units is stowed away among the forgotten ideals of the past.

## THE FRUSTRATION OF SEX

*Oppression or Repression?*

**I**N OUR DAY, sex has been transformed from a source of enjoyment into a neurasthenic complaint, and is taken to the clinic for treatment. Our sexual troubles have become the full-time occupation of an army of analysts, professors and scientific investigators, and a complete literature of books and pamphlets has grown up to advise people on how to manage their instincts. Finally, if this were not enough to witness to the disorder into which our sexual life has fallen, we find sex elevated to the status of a sociological theory which sets out to account in exclusively erotic terms for the whole origin, development and present discontent of civilization.

In the case of any illness, the function attacked begins to assume a heightened importance in the eyes of the sufferer. If we are not to lose our heads in discussing the problem of sex, we must treat its modern exaggeration as a product of the disorder, and, while not under-estimating its real importance, we must not be misled by the fantastic theories which have been built around it. Psycho-analysis, for instance, is too much a symptom of the disease it would diagnose to be valid as an explanation. Its enormous popularity derives from the fact that Freud gave a name—frustration—to people's feelings that their individualities were being crushed and stifled by modern conditions of life. It mattered little that in speaking of frustration he used this exclusively sexual jargon and ignored all other aspects of their discontent. Sex makes an admirable emotive symbol round which many diverse feelings may be concentrated, while the flaunting of sex always offers a safe and easy token of rebellion to weak natures.

Freud's theories were really tantamount to a declaration of the rights of man, disguised in an erotic formula, and had the significance for our age which Rousseau's cult of the noble savage had for the decaying eighteenth century. Society was

accused of robbing us of our pleasures, our freedom and the spontaneity of our instincts. Each individual, it was said, was born with an inalterable sexual constitution which he should be free to express, but society imposed moral laws which limited his instincts and turned the energy thus repressed to its own cultural uses. The hostility between society and individual was thus inevitable and eternal.

Little understanding as this dualistic scheme showed of the true, reciprocal nature of the social relationship, one can understand that it accorded well with people's feelings and therefore easily found adherents. It fused into a single expressive formula all those attitudes of assertive individualism, social hostility and hedonism whose growth we have traced in the last chapter. If work were so disagreeable, then pleasure was the thing for which to strive. Psychoanalysis, embodying that spirit of disillusionment which had begun to grow as the promises of industrialism failed of fulfilment, prophesied that the frustration of pleasure would be the doom of civilization. While the repression of sex indeed released the energy by which culture was built up, it also produced an amount of resentment and antagonism which led men to destroy what they had created as soon as they had created it. The whole effort was a purposeless waste of time. This is exactly what everybody had come to think. While Marxians were complaining of economic oppression, Freudians were complaining of instinctual repression, and both were attacks on the same set of conditions from different angles.

### *The Purpose of Sex*

As I tried to make clear in considering economic problems, the destruction of psychological purpose is a far more potent method of creating discontent than the mere exploitation of the workman on which Marxians so much insist. People do not rebel only against hard work and low pay; but they rebel if, in addition, their work seems to lead nowhere and gives no sense of personal and social achievement. We must try to understand sex along similar lines. We must be clear at the outset what functions in the psychic economy sex is intended to fulfil and we must enquire how and why the full value of these functions is so seldom attained.

In spite of all Freud's pronouncements he can give us no help

along such lines of these, for he was interested in the mechanism rather than in the purpose of sex. It is even difficult to discover from his writings what element in sex he actually conceived as frustrated. He did not surely understand the matter physically, although this is the sense in which so many of his followers have taken him. It was under this misapprehension that the "bright young things" of the 'twenties sought to put psychoanalysis into practice and found to their cost that mere physical sex, unaccompanied by the proper psychic satisfactions, increases, if anything, the sense of frustration. Sexual licence is the result of frustration, not its cure. The sexual act then becomes an irritant instead of a pleasure, and people are driven to its infinite repetition for the same reason as they are obsessed by the mania for work—because in both cases a sense of true fulfilment is always tantalisingly just out of reach. The solution of sexual difficulties must always be one of quality rather than of quantity, and can be attained only by way of an improved understanding of the whole meaning of the function.

If frustration is not physical, then it is assuredly psychological. And here there is an aspect of the sexual question which is full of significance for the average individual, but which receives no attention from psychoanalytic theory. I believe the word "virility" hardly occurs in Freud's writings, excluded as it was by his preoccupation with pleasure. Yet virility plays much the same role in the sexual life that success and achievement play in the working life. A man is required by the standards of society and by his own self-respect to be efficient at his work and to show an adequately virile role in his sex. Whether we take note of the contempt which is shown for those who are in any way deficient, the prejudice against homosexuals, or the anxious care of adolescents to attain the full stature of men, the stress upon this value is quite unambiguous.<sup>1</sup>

This consideration at once clashes with the Freudian theory that society has any interest in repressing the sexual life. Moral-

<sup>1</sup> In regard to homosexuality, one objection is bound to be that it was not unfavourably regarded at certain periods of Greek history. The fact is that it was accorded favour only because it was then enlisted on the side of virility. Plato explains that it was an incentive to bravery on the field of battle, for no man would willingly show himself a coward in the eyes of his admirer. To-day, homosexuality is generally a training for effeminacy, is an evasion of the full sexual role, and has accordingly been condemned by public opinion.

ity, although it may act as a check upon certain forms of sexual expression, has a positive as well as a negative side. Even on the negative side it is directed to limiting any inclination towards perverse sex only in order to canalize and heighten the main instinct. Perverse sex, as Freud himself told us, is the result of a childhood fixation and represents a lingering at an infantile stage of development. It is a limitation upon virility and is for this reason discouraged. Likewise the prohibition against masturbation in childhood is not inspired by any desire to repress the sexual instinct as such, but by the opposite desire to confirm and to strengthen it by the avoidance of habits which might impede its future full development. Whether our particular code of morality may sometimes be mistaken in its methods is an entirely different question, and one on which psychoanalysis has much that is valuable to say. The fact remains that society shows itself far from hostile to the sexual life. Legal sex is encouraged. Spinsters and bachelors are not given full value, and there are equally strong compulsions towards a settled state of matrimony as there are prohibitions against irregular forms of intercourse. The purpose of morality is simply to harness the instinct to social ends. Thereby it disciplines and civilizes it, enriching it with new values. It furnishes us with a set of demands which call out our capacities and ensures for our sex the highest qualitative expression.

From the same point of view, the idea that society's work is done at the expense of sexual energy is seen to be entirely misleading. Let us follow a man back from his office, whence he returns tired and jaded by the day's work, his mind full of worries, or full, perhaps, of resentments at being snubbed by a superior or double-crossed in a business deal. His home becomes a refuge and his sex a consolation. A satisfactory sexual union sends him out into the world again with fresh courage to tackle the difficulties of his job. Sex and work, so far from being antithetical, affirm and support one another. All our life sex continues to be a means of renewing our strength and enriching our being.

But, conversely, of course, discouragement in work, or discouragement of any other kind, by making a man less virile and confident in his approach to sex, may produce a failure or partial failure in sexual achievement which drains him still further of energy. Sex acts both ways, heightening general vitality

when the approach to it is affirmative, lowering it when the approach is hesitant and the result failure. Generalizing from the case of the neurotic, Freud saw only the latter effect. Strangely enough, for a psychologist, he ignored the psychological in favour of the physical. He failed to see that the physical pleasure we derive from sex is very largely dependent upon the achievement of its main psychological purpose of confirming our potency and raising our value as human beings, and that the anger we feel at sexual failure is not the result of mere deprivation of pleasure, but of the blow which is given to our pride. We feel ourselves robbed of the values which confirm our individuality and give us the courage to proceed with life. Frustration, in fact, is frustration not of the libido, but of our potency and sense of worth.

As a further illustration of this point of view, it may be well to add a word about the famous theory of sublimation. There are, indeed, people, notably saints and religious teachers, who appear to be able to dispense with a sexual life. We may assume that they are persons with so absolute a conviction of their end and whose thoughts and activities are so concentrated upon realizing it that anything else appears to them in the light of a troublesome distraction. They are, in fact, people of great courage, to whom sex is as little necessary as a means of confirming their value as is worldly success. It is, I think, almost invariably the case that a person who can afford to despise the one will also despise the other. But the worth of the average person needs the confirmation supplied by achievement in both these spheres, and a doctrine of sublimation must be considered as unsuitable for him. It is particularly out of place when recommended to people who are in any way neurotic or frustrated, for these are already under-equipped with the courage necessary for tackling even the ordinary demands of life. In such cases, the counsel to sublimate desires already accentuated by failure merely offers them a high-minded excuse for retreating still further before their problems, and ends by turning their want of courage to adventure themselves into a virtue.

Sublimation is equally the most inappropriate remedy to offer a society already suffering from discouragement and frustration. Modern man runs to sex as a compensation for the fact that his work offers him so little fulfilment. But because he approaches sex with diminished confidence, this compensation

is also likely to fail him. On complaining of this to the psychologist, he is then told to go back and find his sublimation in work! The truth is, as we can convince ourselves by studying history, that sublimation is possible only for individuals and societies that are *not* frustrated. An age which is full of courage is congenial both to sexual fulfilment and to abstinence, producing at the same time both the greatest lovers and the greatest saints, while an age which is afflicted in the manner of ours offers diminished opportunities for both.

### *The Psychology of Love*

Sex, its satisfactions and frustrations, is always relative to the development of individuality. Thus, among animals, where there is no sense of individuality, the function remains on a purely physical plane. Among primitive and undeveloped human beings, the sexual demands which people make upon each other, although, no doubt, at the height of their capacities, are not by our standards very complex. Among ourselves, however, the psychic element far outweighs the physical in importance, there is greater particularity of choice, and much more exacting demands are made in regard to satisfaction. Differences are to be observed even among the classes and individuals which make up our society. The really outstanding man often finds sexual adaptation extremely difficult, and his biography may tell of a career chequered with unfortunate love affairs. This is the result, not of his especially perverse or misdirected "libido", but of the fact that for him it is hard to find another person adapted to his level and capable of fulfilling all his demands. The higher we value ourselves as individuals the more refined will be the satisfactions we ask of sex, and, where the psychical element is so much in question, it is impossible for us to treat the problem in any other shape than as a problem of love.

Those who consider sex as a mere means to pleasure, or those who regard it in the opposite, puritanical manner as nothing but a means to procreation, are therefore equally partial and mistaken in their views. In our present state of development, sex has been raised to a mental plane where both these purposes become subsidiary. The theory that sees it only as pleasure turns it into a bagatelle, entirely overlooking its bearing upon individuality. The theory that sees it only as a means to pro-

creation reduces the function to its narrowest and most rudimentary level, stripping it of all its psychological values, and placing us once again on a level with the animals. It is extraordinary what pains are taken to deprecate sex and to limit its scope. We can never hope to solve its problems until we make it yield the highest values of which it is capable. Just as we can find satisfaction in work only provided that the fullest demands are made upon our capacities, so sexual satisfaction can be achieved only when each partner tests to the utmost the other's capacity to love.

Confusion as to the nature of love is so widespread that I cannot omit a rather detailed analysis of what is meant by it. The quest for love begins as soon as the child outgrows the need for its parents. Love in this again shows its social nature. It is one of the spurs which drive the child out of the family into the larger world and force him to undertake the business of earning a living. Nevertheless, once he has entered society, love must in some way be a continuation of the parental relationship, which in one form or another is never throughout life wholly lost. The child received from its parents protection against insecurity and the consolation of feeling itself cherished in spite of its weakness. Counter-balancing this need for protection it had a desire to become strong and independent on its own account, to grow up and become as capable as the parents. The lover likewise wants this protection and consolation, while contrarily he wishes to reconstitute the whole family situation with himself in the parents' superior position. Love is therefore a balance between the urge to receive protection as if one were a child, and the urge to give it as if one were the parents. The fact of being cherished is a proof of one's value, and the exercise of protection over another is a confirmation of one's strength. Thus a woman wishes to depend upon her lover, but she also wishes at times to mother him. A man desires to protect the woman, but also at times to play and be comforted like a little boy. For both partners the love-relationship is a mixture of strength and tenderness. In Shakespeare's account of how Desdemona fell in love with the Moor, there is a beautiful presentation of this state of mind. Othello explains to the Senate:

“She loved me for the dangers I had passed,  
And I loved her that she did pity them.”

Desdemona admired and trusted Othello for his strength, while she longed to comfort him for the hardships he had endured. He, in return, enjoyed the naif boasting of his prowess, while he was grateful for the tenderness she offered.

It is just this contrary or double form of exchange, this alternation of give and take, which makes love feasible. Were both partners seeking only one thing, they would clash. There could be no exchange if each desired only to be pampered, or only to be strong, and if one were to insist on being always strong while the other remained weak, their inequality would soon become intolerable. A multitude of inadequacies in playing the role of lover do indeed arise from these causes. A man may be too heavily masculine and resent any courting or petting on the woman's part, so that in the end she finds her self-expression limited and characterizes him as dull. He may also make too many demands upon her instinct for mothering, until she begins to regard him as weak or effeminate. Similarly, it has been said that all women may be divided into mothers and courtesans. While the mother-type manages the man and devotes herself to his welfare, she may not take sufficient care to charm or to interest him. The courtesan-type exploits her feminine charm to the utmost, but she expects the man to be continually the protector and is apt to give little in the way of tenderness.

Poets and novelists tell us on the whole surprisingly little about the genesis of love. If Shakespeare does so in the instance quoted, it is because he felt called upon to justify to his audience so unnatural a choice of lover as Othello. It is more usual for heroes and heroines to fall in love as the plot requires, without much reference to their particular needs and characters. Love, in fact, is generally assumed to be an inexplicable passion which may affect anybody and which is outside the control of either party. This is also the primitive's view of his emotions, which are regarded as coming to him from outside or as if he were "inspired". We continue to regard love as inspiration, because we can abandon ourselves to it the more frankly if we do not have to question it or to regard ourselves as responsible. Love must appear, not as a product of our own psychology, but as the overwhelming effect upon us of the power and virtue of the beloved. Limited to a carefully calculated give and take, love would be about as exciting as a commercial transaction; it could never raise our significance beyond the level of everyday experience.

and everyday emotions, which is what we require it to do. If it is to have any real effect, belief in it must be wholehearted and it must seem to possess a magical quality, so that we become subject to what Plato calls a "divinely inspired madness". The more we wish love to act as a confirmation, the higher must we value the person who admires us. The person we set out to protect must be infinitely precious. His or her moral qualities and opinions, including his opinion of ourselves, must be infinitely worthy of respect. To heighten the value of the loved one makes it possible to submit to him, just as to endow God with all powerful virtues makes it no indignity to worship Him. It also makes the winning of the loved one seem more of a triumph, giving us the mingled feeling of pride and gratitude that we are thus favoured.

If love is thus founded upon the psychological needs of the individual, it is also founded on a long social tradition which has devised it as an expedient to meet these needs and which has carried its stylization to the present point of development. Poets and artists are continually reinforcing this tradition, and the example of parents, together with the whole manner in which the family is arranged, causes the child to imbibe it in an unconscious and natural way. The work of tracing this tradition in its various changes throughout the centuries has never, I think, been adequately undertaken, but we could at least carry it back uninterruptedly to the Troubadours and the Provençal Courts of Love, wherein the lords and ladies of the time sought to establish its etiquettes.

The tenor of the tradition in its original state seems to have been that man and woman each had a distinct role to play and a distinct type of satisfaction to experience. Man should find his satisfaction in the exercise of his superior strength, and his chief glory therefore lay in feats of physical endurance and martial conquest, while woman should find hers in worshipping him as a god and in bearing him children in return for the prizes of victory which he lays at her feet.<sup>1</sup> We must not overlook the hard element in love, which is the ideal's preservative against sentimentality. Each partner has a desire for conquest and sacrifice. What we are told to-day by dictators—that war is to man what childbirth is to woman—would not be entirely beside the point, were war the heroic thing it used to be. The chivalric

<sup>1</sup> S. Lazarsfeld: *The Rhythm of Life*.

code, which sees in war and childbirth the culmination of the passion of love, is the highest romantic glorification of the masculine and feminine roles.

Love, therefore, has its etiquettes, and the lover is not free to indulge himself as he pleases. His behaviour has to harmonize with the expectations in the mind of his partner. If he exercises no discipline over himself, if he shows himself as weak or depressed or in any way unworthy of love, he deprives the partner of the wherewithal to build up an ideal picture of him. Nowadays, although martial valour has been largely replaced by other qualities, such as moral or intellectual superiority, man must still show himself to be brave and independent in spirit and is still expected to pay tribute to women. Couples, if they are wise, may no longer exaggerate themselves to the height of heroes and princesses, yet in the fulfilment of their sexual roles this basic fiction still lingers in the background. In the sexual act itself, man still wishes to live for a moment as a god in his virility. In all the affairs of life he wishes to protect and to cherish the woman with his power. She must therefore be willing to play her feminine role, to accept this protection and to enjoy it. She must be willing to worship and make sacrifices in return. The man will demand that she take trouble with her dress, her looks, her behaviour, that she does him credit and appears before the world as an object worthy of his admiration. He wishes her to take care of his comfort, not merely for the sake of the comfort, but as a mark of tribute to his importance. Equally, woman expects of the man that he will lead and show responsibility in those spheres of life which are his concern, and she desires from him the full measure of compliments, homage, presents and consideration due to her as his consort. In older, chivalric times, love was used as a spur to drive each partner on to high deeds and noble actions. To-day, it still exacts a certain standard of discipline and achievement, and sees to the maintenance of social morale. Its value to society is therefore as great as its value to the individual, and the higher its cultivation is taken the more will the whole work of civilization be furthered.

### *Failures in Love*

It is easy to see the delicacy of adjustment necessary if the role of lover is to be successfully played. Love is not an innate in-

stinct; on the contrary, it is a highly artificial creation on the basis of the biological urge. It is an exalted form of make-believe, which can bring us either the profoundest feeling of reality or the bitterest disillusionment. Only a person whose whole attitude to living is finely proportioned is likely to succeed in this game in which humour is so easily forgotten and fiction confounded with common sense. Love is neither wholly serious nor altogether play. Treated only as play, the result is likely to be a cynical attitude which makes for disappointing shallowness of emotion and breeds distrust between the partners. Treated with exaggerated seriousness, it may lead to a lack of dexterity and adaptability, or end as a form of escapism. Above all, the equilibrium of love is upset the moment any sort of competitive struggle replaces co-operation and mutual support. Tradition has seen to it that the two roles are equal and complementary. The differences between the sexes are carefully cultivated in order to realize to the fullest the unique worth of each, and the essence of the relationship lies in the honour they do to each other. Any attempt to disturb this mutuality will bring the whole illusion into dust.

The consequences of any failure to play the love-role according to the rules can best be studied in what we know of the neurotic. Psychology tells us that the neurotic has an exaggerated craving for love, which he sees as an easy and almost magical way of winning admiration and support. Yet it is precisely this craving which stands in the way of his attaining what he needs. Love is truly a means of raising our worth, but it is nevertheless far from being a sort of universal remedy. It can be affirmative only between affirmative people, and the neurotic has not yet outgrown his dependence upon the parents. He needs extra love to replace what he received from them, and he makes upon the partner the demands that a child would make. His tendency is to exaggerate both sides of love until they produce contradiction. Emphasis is laid upon the protection and consolation required from the partner. Emphasis is also laid upon the rebellious nature of the child and its refusal to submit to control. The neurotic demands such pampering and makes such play with his weakness that he provokes contempt; at the same time he exaggerates his superiority and becomes so domineering that he provokes resistance. His overbearing character and his contradictory weakness ruin the other person's ideal

picture of him. What he desires from love can only be had at the expense of the partner, for he demands to be pampered, yet he will not submit, and he demands to rule, yet he will not exercise initiative and responsibility. The partner is then reduced to doing all the pampering while remaining perfectly obedient. It is small wonder, therefore, if the neurotic finds himself "frustrated".

What applies to the neurotic applies basically, if in lesser degree, to all love-affairs which end badly. An unsuccessful love, in which one partner alone was at fault, would be rare. Both partners have usually their faulty attitudes. Having come together in search of security, neither is likely to possess the courage to make an early break, and the struggle between them will take a prolonged and complex course. Neither will make the concessions necessary for mutuality. Should one partner attempt to do so the other will be likely to use it as a basis for further demands until resistance again becomes necessary. They each infect the other with their incessant striving, which tends to raise more and more the whole emotional tone of the relationship. The heroic roles are here attempted against a background of fear for prestige, producing the desire, not so much to test the partner, as actually to conquer and reduce him.

As the proofs of their value which the insecurity of each demands become more difficult and the dominating challenge of each harder to meet, there generally comes a time when one feels unequal to giving more and his potency seems to diminish. The pattern of the relationship then becomes one of passive obstinacy and active aggression. The more active partner will all the time be trying to elicit a greater response, the other will show resistance and try to escape further demands. Love becomes a flight and a pursuit. Excuses and evasions are made on one side, accusations on the other. The love of the one becomes a reproach against the other who does not love so well. At this point the more active partner, feeling his victim slipping from his grasp, increases his exactions, and, as nothing makes a person more miserable than not to be able to return love adequately, the flight of the other becomes all the more precipitate. The heroic stature of both is now sadly diminished, one feeling that he has failed to love, the other feeling that he has been unable to secure a return. Who has triumphed and who has been defecated it would be difficult to say. The more active

partner seems in some respects in the leading position, and is certainly felt to be so by the other. But the more passive can exercise just as much tyranny. If the first is directly aggressive in his importunity, the second, through the indirect use of his weakness, forces the other to wait upon him. Taking the more feminine line, he is apt to irritate and stimulate the other into activity, and then to repulse and snub him. The conclusion, like the conclusion of most long-drawn-out engagements, remains indecisive.

When each partner feels that he cannot overcome the other, the drama enters the final stage, with the transformation of love into hate. Instead of each action of the beloved being interpreted as significant of his beauty and charm of character, each is now the object of intense criticism. Nothing he says or does is neutral. Each "yes" seems symbolic of his whole dominating attitude, each "no" signifies his eternal refusal to give what the other wants. This criticism is alternated with times in which the love is remembered and for a brief moment regains its former ascendancy. There are moods of sadness and reminiscent sentimentality, when the couple recall the radiant moments they have known, so that violent fluctuations of opinion arise, and neither quite knows whether he loves or he hates. But reminiscence alone cannot remove the hardness and bitterness which have grown up between them. Neither will really give any more or make any further sacrifices for the other. Their accusations against each other generally refer to the same thing seen from their respective angles. The woman perhaps complains of the man's weakness, the man of the woman's domination. He declares that she will not submit sufficiently to give him the opportunity to show his strength; she argues that he will not take the initiative sufficiently for her to have the confidence to submit. Both wait for the other, and the deadlock is complete. The undercurrent of struggle in love, and the transformation of love into hate, is of so regular occurrence that Freud imagined love and hate as a single "ambivalent" emotion. But a balanced love eases off into mutual affection and respect. Hate is felt only when there exists a competitive struggle between the partners to triumph over each other, a struggle in which both must fail. Love, instead of performing its function of heightening human significance, then only lowers it.

*The Romantic Tradition*

Once the nature of the sexual role has been understood, the reasons for the frequent failure nowadays to play it correctly become immediately apparent. The whole ensemble of economic conditions described in the last chapter were shown to lead to a mentality whose main characteristics were self-assertion on the one hand and a desire for security on the other. It is clear that this mentality has only to be transferred from the factory to the home in order to produce the picture of the unsuccessful lover, with his contradictory desire for domination and for pampering.

The modern worker and the modern lover are the same person in two different situations. The mentality induced in man by the degradation of his life in the factory will inevitably influence his sexual approach, causing him to seek compensation for his humiliations in attempts to rule the partner. In an age of mental, moral and material insecurity men and women become insufficiently affirmative as well as too aggressive to play their sexual roles with success. The individual cannot find his way in life and clings too long to the parental relationship for support. The vastness of the social process reduces him to comparative insignificance, an insignificance which is brought home to him the more acutely because he moves in an urbanized environment against the background of the crowd. The sordidness of this town life depresses vitality, and the unfortunate combination of a sense of insecurity with a well-policed and highly domesticated milieu limits the sense of adventure. Our capacity for love depends so much upon our emotional richness that it is small wonder if it is destroyed by the soulless processes of industrialism. Competition is the worst possible preparation for the co-operation of loving. Monotony and specialization restrict experience, and, together with subordination to an unwelcome master, stifle initiative and self-expression. The daily cares, fears, tedium and restrictions of modern life offer little scope for men and women to conceive themselves in heroic roles. The woman would need a strong dose of imagination to conceive her insignificant husband in striped trousers as a god, nor does she make him a particularly flattering picture of a princess. It is not long before both partners wilt under the discouraging influence

of their environment, cease to take trouble with themselves, and fall a prey to those petty fears and anxieties which, more than any major disasters, are effective in draining a person of his humour and his vitality. Within the cramped domestic circle, the woman blames the man for the indifferent ideal of masculinity which he offers her, and her covert contempt successfully destroys the remainder of his pride.

In contrast to actual conditions, we have inherited from the nineteenth century a romantic attitude which exalts the emotion of love to the highest possible pitch. In its proper time and setting this romanticism had its value. It was part of the century's exploration of the subjective self, and it rescued love from the stereotyped etiquettes which in the preceding age had coarsened and superficialized the emotion and lost it its spontaneity. In the eighteenth century, love was taken too cynically; in the nineteenth, too seriously. Wagner's glorification of the heroic and the elemental was a last convulsive assertion of virility in the face of the low materialistic and commercial values and the timid domesticity of his time. In the best classic periods, where there is order and stability and where other outlets exist for the sense of worth, love is apt to be regarded rather narrowly, after the manner of the ancients, as a "tragic madness", while in romantic periods, especially in an epoch of starved individualism such as ours, it becomes the consummation of living. Probably the romantics, with their bias in favour of equalitarian individualism, hoped that love, as they preached it, could become a universal possibility. If so, they ignored the fact that idealizations of their kind cannot flourish in an atmosphere of sordidness and mediocrity. The heroic ideal was built up in an aristocratic society, and the roles and attitudes it cultivates can only become cheapened and falsified once they are democratized, until the whole ideal slips into a sugary decadence.

This is precisely what has happened. Ours may not be a particularly lustful age, but it is a sexually irritated age. The sexual urge is exacerbated by failure to find satisfaction, titillated by contact with crowds, by advertisements, and by other forms of sex appeal. The whole fetid atmosphere of our towns is loaded with sexual suggestiveness and the dissipation of mental energy which this causes debilitates people still further and puts them in still worse case for loving. Meanwhile novels, feuilletons

and papers dwell on no other theme than that of sexual adventure. All the sugar romances of the films have that peculiarly poignant and yearning note which characterizes the mentality of the weak, the dwarfed and the lonely. Our dreams of an ampler life find vicarious satisfaction in watching celluloid heroes and heroines move in a world which is always new, bright, brave and clean. Because these visions of splendid and fabulous relationships are imbibed in the passive manner of a daydream, they depress instead of stimulate activity in the desired direction, and only serve to increase the disappointment felt at the sordid reality.

The emotion of love, being exaggerated and universalized, is really obtained too cheaply. By mass-suggestion, every young person is now led to believe himself or herself as almost continually "in love". Every sexual attraction which is not raised to the Romeo and Juliet plane is deemed invalid. The behaviour of lover is narrowly conventionalized and his emotions largely suggested to him by the environing culture of films. To think oneself, or to be thought to be "in love" becomes a means of puffing up the ineffectual personality, and every young person must claim to experience these sentiments unless he is to find himself backward or inferior in comparison with his companions. Love is truly a role, but if its fictions are disproportionately exaggerated, they become falsifications, which is a wholly different matter. As a genuine passion, it is less rare than poetic inspiration, but probably, as Plato thought, of the same kind. It is not experienced by all people and, in its highest perfection, only by a very few. This perfection probably requires something of an heroic nature for its attainment.

The truth is that the ideals of love, if they are to be workable, must never be carried beyond what is appropriate to the place and circumstance of the person concerned. We find genuine love in every stratum of society, but society, not being uniform in its development, it is generally the case that while those at the apex have attained a cultivated individuality, those at the base are still in a half-primitive state. Love, therefore, attains its highest point only among the more advanced classes. It will be successfully cultivated on the heroic plane only where its fictions receive the support of real rank, wealth, and power. History, of course, tells of famous lovers who were poor and of humble birth, but it speaks of them with a certain wonder, as of

persons whose exceptional nobility of character transcended their material disadvantages. Normally, the love of the peasant is not accentuated to the same degree as that of his lord. The mutuality and respect which the peasant couple show for each other may be just as genuine, but their relationship is more inarticulate and matter-of-fact. The common-sense of the peasant would repudiate any raising of the fiction to the height manifested in *Tristan and Isolde*. He would laugh at any suggestion that he imagine his wife as a princess when he knows her to be only a milkmaid. And he would be right! His emotions are perfectly wholesome and satisfying as they are, because linked with his status and the degree of his personal development. But when this peasant is turned into a member of the urban proletariat, not only is his assurance and vitality undermined, but he is presented with over-dramatized versions of love and asked to model himself on attitudes which are quite unsuitable to his circumstances.

### *Woman's Real Grievance*

One cause of frustration is, therefore, the unsuitability in modern conditions of the old tradition of love. It is an aristocratic and heroic tradition out of keeping with our industrial democracy. Exaggerated by the romantic movement of the last century as the one remaining source of glamour, it has been slowly vulgarized and sentimentalized to suit our less powerful natures, yet it continues to make demands which we are unable to fulfil and to encourage expectations which ought rather to be toned down.

There is a second way in which the tradition is now harmful. It was a tradition formed in an atmosphere in which martial and agricultural ways of life prevailed. Upon this solid basis it was able to uphold the equal value of both sexes and to honour their respective functions. But we live now in a time when the home is diminishing in importance and when life is becoming more and more "socialized". Where the home, instead of being an isolated nucleus, set in rural surroundings and crowded with servants, dependents and children, is a labour-saving flat, the scope of woman's functions contracts and a feeling of sexual inequality arises. The home is no longer the place where man lives and works, surrounded by the atmosphere of his family.

The woman is left all day without companionship, and the sense of partnership between husband and wife is lost. It appears as if all the important, breadwinning work were man's province. Man is carried out and about upon the stream of life, woman stays in the home, applied unendingly to the same petty routine. As the home becomes smaller and more urbanized, household duties occupy less and less of her faculties. The sordidness in which the huge populations of the industrial areas live takes away much of her pride in her work. The social background of the home—the relations she has with her neighbours—is not stable, but doubtful and changing, and, in spite of the crowded nature of her environment, she suffers a sense of isolation. In sum, as the home unit diminishes in size, in importance, in aesthetic value, in unity and stability, the whole functional worth of woman diminishes likewise. Industrialism, which narrows the chances of man finding fulfilment in his work, brings equal hardships for the woman. With every diminution in the number and importance of her tasks, she finds her self-expression curtailed and she no longer has the feeling that all her powers are being used.

It cannot be too strongly emphasized that woman's real grievance does not lie in the direction assumed by the feminists. Her discontent is due, not to political inequality, but to functional inequality. Politically, woman has rarely in the long course of history had full equality with man, and the lack of a vote could not possibly be regarded as the specific cause of her modern restlessness. Stories of woman's age-long oppression until the enlightened twentieth century came to emancipate her are no more to be credited than the catalogue of woes said to have been the eternal lot of the toiling masses. Periods of oppression there have certainly been, but also periods of pleasurable harmony between both sexes and classes. Society could not have held together if one-half of the human race in regard to sex, and four-fifths of the remainder in regard to work, had lived in a permanently dissatisfied state. As I hope to show in other chapters, such general dissatisfaction, when it arises, has an effect upon social institutions which leads to their destruction within a very brief space of time.

Before the industrial revolution, the position of woman was, on a certain view, lower than at present, while in other ways it was to be preferred. Her fate was then at the disposal of her

parents. She could be forced into marriage against her wishes, she had little initiative and independence, and no redress, save that of the Church, in case of masculine abuse of power over her. But, like the "oppressed classes", she often led a life satisfactory enough in its practical aspects to compensate for any theoretical lack of rights. Parents and husband gave stability to her world, and she had no lack of functional importance.

Although, in the eighteenth century, woman, at least in the upper classes, where the idea of feudal alliance between families prevailed, found her career narrowed to that of wife or nun, she had the compensation of a laxer morality. Marriage, for the aristocracy, was essentially *de convenance*, as it frequently still is. At its best, this type of marriage was neither licentious nor mercenary. Its purpose was to ensure the principle of eugenic selection, and much importance was attached to the moral and physical character of the parentage on both sides whenever a union was proposed. Marriage had the dignity and social nature which belong to all the institutions of the organic society. It perpetuated the family line and the ancestral tradition as things more important than the lives and particular preferences of individuals, and it was entered upon, not to gratify lust, but to contribute children. As long as this purely social alliance was respected a fair amount of latitude was allowed to both partners. Love, not being part of the original contract, could, if necessary, be sought outside it—a feature of the time which, when viewed from our side of the Victorian era, makes it seem more licentious than was actually the case.

It is true, however, that the marriage *de convenance* became degraded as the feudal period drew to its close. As love became more shallow, libertinage became more conspicuous, and was carried on with less respect for the conventions. The chivalric ideal lost ground, and there developed the coarser attitude of Balzac's time, which bracketed women with horses. Since the aristocracy was becoming impoverished, the dignity and eugenic merit of the family alliance degenerated into the sale of the women of the house to the highest bidder among the nabobs. The idealism of the Victorians reacted indignantly against this state of affairs. Both in the upper classes and also in the lower, where industrial conditions were giving rise to the intolerable exploitation of child labour, the Victorians felt called upon to curtail the absolute authority of the parents.

Gradually, marriage was transformed from a social and family institution into a matter of individualist inclination. Its eugenic side was left, like everything else, to *laissez-faire* or natural selection.

But the Victorians also kept the balance even by instituting a far stricter code of morality. In taking the view that marriage was a contract based on love, they turned infidelity into a serious crime. The Victorian woman was bred up on the viewpoint of romantic love and of the individual's right to make her own choice, but once this choice had been made, she found herself shut up within her marriage as within a cast-iron safe. The only romantic experience she was ever allowed was the single experience of the man she had married. The relationship became as stuffy as the houses in which it was lived. As we can see from Ibsen's plays, woman tended to become merely the doll or plaything of man's leisure hours, and a far greater compliance was expected of her. Whereas the eighteenth century was dominated by the idea of the lover, with the husband as hardly more than a conventional figurehead, the nineteenth century was dominated by the husband, with the lover contemptuously reduced to the level of a mere philanderer. In the former period, the woman still had to be wooed, and she could distribute her favours more as she chose; in the latter, her favours were taken for granted and she was at the mercy of her husband's rights. Her ennui, which Ibsen so well depicts, was the result equally of the sexual confinement in which she was kept and of her lack of full functional activities. Victorian morality, while helping to free women from parental authority, nevertheless assumed a specifically anti-feminist character designed to hold her in subjection to her husband.

The increasing functional inequality between the sexes occasioned the growth of that heavy-handed Victorian paternalism which exaggerated the protective role of the male and turned the chivalric ideal into an insultingly sentimental pity for woman's "weakness". Male priggishness increased. Since the man, unfortunately for himself, had arrived at an impossibly superior position, he became insistent upon keeping woman in her place, and acutely sensitive to the least sting to his *armour-propre*. All woman could do in return was to exploit this man-made view by exaggerating it. She presented herself as chaste, frail, holy, conjuring up lassitudes, headaches, anemias,

and monthly indispositions as a means of evading the man and fastening upon him a character of coarseness and callous sensuality. She gradually lost the sense of responsibility, became a drag upon the man, importuning him to cure her of her ennui, to console, comfort and pamper her. By burdening him with her affairs and her life she sought to tax his strength to breaking point and thus to prove him fallible. Or else she turned wholly to the consolations of motherhood. Her youth and her charms evaporated more quickly, since she had no further hope of using them for fresh conquests. The tradition of love declined, ruined by the competition between the sexes, by man's attempts to maintain an impossible prestige and woman's attempts to regain her importance by every sort of device.

*The New Rational Tradition*

These difficulties were of slow growth. The women of the upper classes retained for a long time the management of large households and families which compensated them in part for the restrictions of Victorian morality, while those of the lower classes left the eighteenth century behind only as they were absorbed into the new industrial towns. Perhaps we may take 1861, the date of Mill's famous essay "On the Subjection of Women" to mark the moment when the problem really came up for discussion. The Victorians then sought to apply to their sexual difficulties their usual panacea of political democracy.

The outlook of feminism is based on the commercial idea of reciprocity. It argues, in the legal and atomistic spirit of its time, that each partner must be regarded as an "individual", and therefore entitled to the same rights as every other individual. The argument can naturally be maintained only provided that it is denied that there are any fundamental differences between men and women which justifies their being subject to different treatment. Thus we find Mill writing: "What is now called the nature of women is an eminently artificial thing—the result of forced repression in some directions, unnatural stimulation in others." If woman were really inferior to man then the legal restrictions upon her would be the less necessary, for in a world of "free competition" her inferiority would be apparent and she could be expected to take her natural place.

The point is one on which we must agree with Mill, as against

the more modern authority of Freud, who maintains the theory of innate differences as a corollary to his belief in fixed libidinal constitutions. Freud draws a picture of woman as an importunate and irresponsible creature, envious of man's work and hostile to his culture, yet full of unscrupulous ambition for her husband's career, vain, narcissistic, lacking the capacity for sublimation, devoid of the sense of justice. It is easy to see that this is the picture of woman as viewed through the eyes of the Victorian male. Such character-trait as envy and jealousy, vanity and ambition, are acquired as the result of woman's social position. Nor does there seem any doubt but that her abilities, or lack of them in certain directions, are similarly the result of circumstance. As Stendhal puts it: "Pedants have kept telling us for two thousand years that women possess keener understandings and men more judgment, that women have more refinement in their ideas and men stronger powers of concentration. A certain city dweller in Paris, who used to stroll occasionally in the gardens of Versailles, similarly came to the conclusion from his own observation that trees came up already clipped."<sup>1</sup>

While granting Mill's argument there are nevertheless practical objections to the feminist point of view. It is difficult to conceive of perfect equality between the sexes so long as we continue to exist under an economic system of competition. Life at present demands from the individual an unremitting specialization at a particular task from adolescence to old age. But the life of woman is broken up in a way that places her under a handicap in the race for highest achievement. There is a period before marriage, when she may take a job, but, once married, she has the whole-time occupation of a family upon her hands. When the family has learned to fend for itself, she is too old to re-enter life upon any considerable scale, yet probably not old enough to have no vitality left her. The breaking up of woman's life into these periods perhaps helps to explain why she can attain so little in the way of special achievement.

The social world is at present arranged by man and is adapted to man's capacity for continuous application. In many other subtle ways it remains biased in a masculine direction. The tradition of culture is dominated by masculine ways of thought, and a woman's mode of expression is not regarded as so im-

<sup>1</sup> Stendhal: *On Love*.

portant. Should woman attempt any form of cultural or artistic work she will probably only succeed in producing inferior imitations of the masculine idiom. Woman, whatever is innate or not innate in her constitution, still sees life in a traditionally feminine way. Art gains nothing if she sacrifices her vision to man's equally conventional vision instead of asserting her own unique contribution. But a woman has to be exceptionally gifted before she can break through to the purely feminine self-expression of a Virginia Woolf and force the world to accept it as work of equal value to that of a man.

Sexual equality belongs logically and inevitably to the programme of Socialism. It would be attainable if the home were to all intents and purposes abolished and the present process of socializing life were carried to completion. Socialism has always been vaguely hostile to marriage. It regards the laws of inheritance as creating class distinctions by favouring the accumulation of wealth in a few lucky families. It sees marriage as a force which makes men conservative of change. The existence of private life and private affairs bars the way to man's complete incorporation in the homogeneous public which is Socialism's ideal. The extremer Socialists therefore anathematized marriage as a "bourgeois institution", and in Russia after the revolution a short-lived attempt was made to abolish it.

This extremism is already outdated, and it is unlikely that anyone to-day conceives of marriage as a "bourgeois institution" in the literal sense. It existed long before capitalism and, like other institutions, it simply takes its colouring from the milieu which surrounds it. Nevertheless, marriage is being destroyed—if not by Socialist arguments then by the collapse of the whole milieu. The conditions of modern life seem to make it more and more unnecessary. Although the form is still there, the content has well-nigh evaporated. Socialism is merely the concluding phase of the bourgeois process of reducing the authority of the parents, separating work from the home, and narrowing the field of private life and the scope of woman's functions. The State has been tending for a long time to take over the responsibilities of the parents and to increase its interference in the domestic sphere. In so far as it provides maternity homes, welfare centres, crèches, free milk, compulsory secondary education, family allowances and the rest, men and women have little left to hold them together beyond the mere

fact of cohabitation. With the responsibilities of marriage reduced to a minimum, the home becomes little more than a bed, some easy chairs, and a kitchenette where tins are opened. Husband and wife are both free to go to the factory and to earn equal pay for equal work, while the State takes the offspring wholly into its charge. Thus some form of Socialism still appears to many as the logical conclusion of present tendencies. By carrying marriage from decay to dissolution it is hoped to overcome the isolation of woman from the important activities of life and to restore a measure of value to her.

We have to consider whether this solution, while admittedly feasible, is psychologically desirable and likely in fact to restore the harmony between the sexes. It must be noted first that democratic equality, here as elsewhere, runs straight to uniformity. Instead of differences between individuals and between sexes being emphasized, they are ironed out. The two sexual roles, although not innate, have been carefully cultivated by our tradition with the evident intention of encouraging the specific worth of each, and of creating the maximum play and tension between them. Love has been generated from the crude sexual instinct by keeping the two sexes at a distance from each other and so making possible their mutual idealization. The Socialist solution is thus hostile not only to marriage but to the love which is its foundation.

This hostility is implicit in Socialism's whole background of rationalist and utilitarian philosophy, which continued throughout the nineteenth century to act in a direction contrary to Wagnerian romanticism. Reason and logic, when they are pursued to an extreme and made the sole rule of life, are incompatible with any sort of idealization and render man incapable of loving. One might here recall the great attack which the romantic Nietzsche levelled against Socratic rationalism. Necessary as the rule of reason may be, it is a standardizing, socializing force and must be balanced by spontaneity and "instinct" if it is not to reduce us ultimately to a common averageness. The outcome of the rationalist spirit of our time is often to make modern couples too grown-up, in their own estimation, to stoop to playing the absurd and delicate make-believe of love. Together with the emphasis upon private inclination, rationalism tended towards a form of "free love" much in vogue in the emancipated 'twenties and charac-

terized by shallowness of emotion and avoidance of responsibility.

The popularity of the rationalist, equalitarian solution is thus largely founded on the fear of love. Given the spiritual dangers involved, neither sex wishes to be committed to too deep a relationship with the other, and, given the difficulties of solving the love problem satisfactorily to-day, neither wishes to take on too many responsibilities. Rationalism is obviously the surest safeguard against any emotional entanglement. The Socialist State panders to this want of courage, promising couples pleasure and freedom without responsibility. It accepts the fact that couples are no longer able to live together permanently, and offers them the opportunity for joy-riding and visits to the cinema while it greedily seizes upon the children in order to bring them up as cogs in its system. This shallow idea of a solution is to cure our frustration by abolishing the difficulty. It removes the last vestiges of independence and responsibility from those apparently unqualified to exercise them. It lowers the social demands which are made upon the lover to the level of his incapacity. It spares him all necessity for sacrifice. By emasculating man and defeminising woman, it neutralizes the tension of their different natures, which has hitherto acted as a tonic and a stimulant to each. All that love does in creating heights and depths, all the expansion it gives to our emotional nature, all its mystery, its magic and its play, all the relief and contrast it affords to the workaday world, are thus eliminated, and men and women are reduced to indistinguishable "individuals", in line with the prevailing tendency to uniformity in all other spheres of life.

It is probable that men and women will ultimately rebel against this crippling of their natures. Woman, finding her own functions whittled away, will discover that it is a poor compensation to be offered a share in man's functions; she will want her own proper functions returned to her. Man, also, will come to feel that he might as well be married to his bicycle as to a woman who creates no home life as the incentive and inspiration of his work. The rationalization of sex deprives individual and society alike of a principle value. If love is reduced to a bagatelle, there is an obvious drop in general morale, and if the home and its maintenance is no longer the central purpose of the individual's life and striving, society has to lead or drive him

by the doubtful expedients of propaganda, economic pressure or exaggerated patriotism.

### *Modern Confusion*

We have, therefore, a romantic tradition unsuitable to modern conditions and a new rationalist tradition which is emotionally unsatisfactory. The last cause which I shall suggest to account for modern frustration is the state of ambiguity and confusion in which we live between the two. We have for this reason largely lost our understanding of the meaning and purpose of love. We flounder between the decadent ideas of chivalry and the modern idea of rational equality. Neither sex knows clearly where it stands or what sort of role it is expected to play. In courting, young couples approach each other without knowing how much protection and chivalry or how much equality will be demanded or given. Some women stress their determination to go shares in everything with the man, which may cause offence to the type who wishes to exercise his prerogative to protect. Other men feel acutely that women demand too many privileges and they cause offence to the type of woman who expects to receive the tributes due to her femininity. In any misunderstanding between couples, neither side is fully aware of the basic presuppositions from which the other is arguing, and each tends to seize on the aspect of the case which favours his cause at the moment.

As matters stand, we no longer have a proper etiquette of love. We live in an uneasy condition of semi-equality which places burdens upon both sexes. The woman is led to expect equality, but finds that in the actually existing competitive milieu there are limitations which prevent her from attaining it. She is driven, in spite of her efforts, out of the larger world into the home. There is still nobody but herself to keep the household together while the man is at work, and she cannot therefore avail herself of whatever opportunities the world may offer save by renouncing love, marriage and children. It is easy for her to vent her dissatisfaction upon the husband whose liberty she envies and whom she privately makes responsible for depriving her of her "rights". Her attitude is that of the Victorian woman aggravated by the new assertiveness of the feminist outlook. Like the Victorian woman, she looks to the

man to supply her deficiencies in self-expression. She expects him to be her stimulant, and, if he fails to cure her ennui, she characterizes him as unexciting, poor-spirited, inconclusive and dull. At the same time, she no longer conceives of herself as bound, like the Victorian woman, to certain obligations and duties. She will neither renounce the home nor make the home her job. She cannot dispense with masculine support, yet ideas on equality have taught her not to submit to masculine guidance. She seems to want all the privileges of equality while retaining all the advantages of the chivalric tradition.

Consequently, man feels overburdened. The more dissatisfied the woman becomes, the more he probably tries to please her, soothe her, take her out, suggest possible amusements. No doubt she is ready to admit that he is "very kind and understanding", but this kindness and understanding is apt, unfortunately, only to irritate her by making him appear weak, doggy, submissive, and even less of a leader than before. Modern conditions have thus undermined man's prestige as much as they have undermined woman's functional importance. Man is in the unenviable position of still having responsibility without the authority which supports it. After working all day—which is not quite the privilege which the woman imagines—he wants to enjoy his home and to have an evening of rest and quiet. He returns to find a disgruntled and critical wife, who has been tied to the children all day, and whose one desire is, not unnaturally, to be taken out. He feels that he cannot possibly be expected to provide her with all those outlets for her self-expression which every human being must necessarily create for himself. He cannot run her life as well as his own, and he feels in an obscure way a great bitterness at the way she makes herself a constant reproach against him and seems to be blaming him all the time for some deficiency or lack of masculinity.

In this whole situation, woman appears as the chief aggressor, not, of course, out of wilfulness, but because of the inferior situation out of which she is half-consciously striving to raise herself. Women, on the whole, are too egocentric, behaving much like the inferior classes in seeking to interpret every difficult situation as especially designed for their injury by the spiteful ingenuity of their oppressors. Men, confronted with this constant peevishness, have become weak, confused and disengaged.

*Marriage and Children*

Marriage therefore decays because love and its etiquettes fall into confusion. It decays also because it ceases to have a social background and a family tradition. The organic bias of the eighteenth century probably exaggerated the social aspect of marriage. While it upheld the family tradition and conventions, it gave too little attention to private inclination. The result was that marriage, separated from love, finally became stereotyped and unsatisfying. The nineteenth century then exaggerated the individualist aspect, declaring marriage to be almost wholly a matter of inclination. But marriage for inclination alone lessens the parents' responsibility, weakens family ties, destroys the family tradition, and ends in universal divorce.

In considering marriage or any other institution, we must never lose sight of the double viewpoint of society and of the individual. To be worth while, marriage must give the individual the feeling that he is standing as the representative of a long line of ancestors which he will perpetuate in his children. The taxation of large incomes and heavy death duties take away much of the hope of living in one's descendants and working for the future. The pampering of the working classes has the same result, for the tendency is for the children handed over to the State to be lost to their begetters. They join the anonymous mass whose names and family background mean nothing, and their loyalty is to the State rather than to the parents.

No doubt these considerations have also their bearing upon the problem of the declining birth-rate. Writers have already stressed various psychological factors which might account for its decline, such as economic insecurity, the decay of a full home life, and the irresponsibility of couples who wish to enjoy themselves without the tie of children. These factors all tone in with the general picture, but I may perhaps add some rather more specific considerations. In former times the incentive to having children appears to have been two-fold. Children were an economic asset and a source of pride and prestige to their parents. At present children are an economic burden and the destruction of the family tradition removes the feeling of pride and prestige. Only the economic aspect of the question has so far received any attention from legislators. But to subsidize the birth of children by means of family allowances, while paying

no attention to the psychology of the situation, will only increase the evil. Family allowances in themselves lessen still further the parents' responsibility, and therefore the interest which attaches to offspring. Only the restoration to the parents of their authority and a guarantee of family permanence would effect an improvement.

Men and women both need the fullest home life as compensation for their insignificance in the greater world. The home must be their kingdom, their creation, their playground. There the man rules as master and the woman as mistress. The maintenance of this small community is the end and object of their work. If the home were really satisfactory, it should not be necessary to look elsewhere for creative ends. The home is also the most suitable environment for the children's education. The family tradition gives the children the feeling of belonging somewhere. It gives them a background, it gives them a special uniqueness, it endows them with a name which has greater significance than that of a mere label. They remain all their life fortified by these supports. From the point of view of the State, a healthy home life is equally indispensable, for moral character and social feeling need the intimate world of the family for their deep development. Moreover, the family is the first and most important of the local ties by which society is knit together. Its disintegration would mean that the authority which before was uniformly spread throughout the community is transferred to a centralized State as its legatee. But the State, as Montesquieu observed of absolute monarchy, is always least secure when seemingly most powerful. It is then no longer based on a hierarchy of petty authorities and local organizations, on employers of labour and fathers of families, by all of whom its will is executed automatically and almost instinctively. Having absorbed all these, it stands supreme, but alone; oppressive, but weak; forced to make a matter of decree all that was performed before without question, yet lacking those channels by which its will can be made to percolate into the minutæ of daily life.

### *Summary*

Let me try to recapitulate the gist of this chapter. My argument has been that marriage was undermined primarily because living conditions prevented a virile and courageous approach to sex and to love. In these conditions the old tradi-

tion of love decayed, the scope of the home was narrowed, and woman, while tied to an irritating round of domestic drudgery, found her functional importance reduced. Her experience paralleled that of man in the factory, for she too was subject to monotony, inequality and loss of creative opportunity. Thus her mentality assumed, like his, the weak and aggressive character common to all oppressed peoples and classes, and a competitive rivalry between the sexes began which made for further misunderstandings between couples. Once the strict Victorian morality was relaxed, the movement for woman's emancipation began, and took the typical form of political rights and economic equality. But rights did not compensate her for the loss of her functional role any more than they compensated the working classes for the debasement of their living conditions under the factory system. The agitation for rights only added a fresh note of theoretical aggressiveness to the strivings of both. Meanwhile the home continued to contract, a growing uniformity between the sexes threatened the uniqueness of each, and the State began to assume the marital responsibilities which couples no longer seemed able to perform.

Men and women have now been emancipated from their specific masculine and feminine functions, isolated as "individuals", and collectivized together. In consequence, the character which our love-life assumes to-day is weak—weak and anarchic like the modern spirit in general. The sexes are inspired by a continual sense of grievance against each other. They have become confused as to the roles they should play, and they probably lack the rigour and discipline to play them correctly, even if they knew what they were. Thus, the cause of frustration does not lie in the "repression of instinct", but in the debasement of personal value. Love having been cheapened and sex become an irritant, we are far from requiring further erotic liberty, but it is precisely this liberty, run to seed as licence, which prevents the attainment of the values that bring a sense of fulfilment. The struggle between the sexes, the disintegration of the home, the lack of stability for the children, the bitterness of frustrated individuals, and all the other consequences of this situation are not, of course, confined in their effects to the sexual sphere, but react back upon society as a whole, contributing fully as much as economic problems to the restlessness, disorientation and discontent of the period. .

## THE DECLINE IN SOCIAL STANDARDS

*The Purpose of Social Life*

MAN'S SOCIAL nature has always been something of a puzzle to philosophers. Some consider sociability and altruism as innate human characteristics and see society as founded upon them. Man, they generally explain is a herd-animal, and, like other herd-animals, has a special "gregarious" instinct.

Another school prefers to see man as a hardened individualist, whose aim, if he could only realize it, would be to live in isolated self-sufficiency. They cannot explain his apparently social nature and the origin of society quite so easily as those who simply put these facts down to a "gregarious" instinct. Perhaps, like Hobbes, they will argue that men, however individualist, would always be driven together by bitter experience of the anarchy and insecurity of a "state of nature"; or they may expatiate, like the utilitarians, on the economic advantages of the division of labour; or they may adopt the new Freudian thesis that men are brought together by libidinal ties and that society is a creation of the God Eros.

There is no need to weary the reader with these pre-occupations, save to point out how little the social nature of man seems to have been understood. To speak, like McDougall, Trotter and others, of a "gregarious" instinct simply renames the problem without solving it, while the explanations of the individualists are all for one reason or another inadequate. Men are not sociable by "instinct", neither are they individualist by "nature". They are sociable in the degree to which their value is raised by joining together. Together, each is psychologically greater, as well as materially more secure and economically richer, than he would be separately. But men are also individualist if and when a certain independence of their fellow creatures raises their significance. The peculiarities of social

organization have their psychological spring in the pulling both ways of the two tendencies.

I will make this clear by an example. What is the reason for sociability among ordinary men? Let us suppose such a man to have attended some social function and to have enjoyed it. Let us ask ourselves in what his enjoyment has consisted. It consisted, surely, in the stimulation received. It may be that he has "shone", that he has been appreciated, that he has met, perhaps several strangers who showed a desire for his further acquaintance, so that he returns home with a heightened feeling of his own value. It is, of course, by no means necessary that each member at a gathering shall consider himself to have played an outstanding role. All will gain a measure of satisfaction if the atmosphere of the gathering was sufficiently gay or stimulating to have raised the general spirits. Conversely, let us consider what the reaction would be should the social event have been a failure. Perhaps our man failed to make an impression or found no stimulation in the general atmosphere. He then has the feeling of being "out of it" and he returns home discouraged. In either case, his purpose in attending the gathering is perfectly plain and is manifested by the results. He went hoping to reap a little reward of psychic support and confirmation. Should he have succeeded, his social "instinct" has been satisfied; should he have failed, he is left either hungering for what he did not obtain or else displeased with such events and determined in future to avoid them. We can see that his dissatisfaction, or, in other words, the frustration of his purpose, tends to make him either more gregarious or more of an individualist, perhaps, even, more of both at the same time.

On the same reasoning, the origin of groups and coterie becomes plain. Their formation is a mutual arrangement for strengthening their members sense of worth. The coterie proceeds on the principle of selecting a limited number of people belonging, perhaps, to the same social or the same intellectual level, who are likely to contribute to its life by their vivid personalities and thus to elevate the whole coterie above the average. It is this elevation which is indispensable if the member is to receive that sense of stimulation of which I have spoken. Likewise the group with a philanthropic interest selects its members with a view to reinforcing their common zeal through the stimulation of numbers. The point of the group or coterie

lies always in its exclusiveness. Participation in its life must be a coveted privilege. The whole value of any kind of snobbery is that it distinguishes and excludes, thus maintaining a high standard of intellect or of elegant behaviour and calling out all that is best in people by means of emulation. Society is composed of groups which are gregarious in regard to their own membership and individualist in relation to other groups.

The life of the coterie demonstrates that here, as elsewhere, a certain reciprocity is required. Nobody can expect to be admired unless he gives others prestige, nor to shine without the stimulation of others. Those fulsome eulogies which the men of earlier centuries were in the habit of paying each other, and which, to our ears, sound rather childish and insincere, were the outcome of a far clearer understanding of the nature and purpose of social life than we possess to-day. No doubt these eulogies did not receive entire credence even from their recipients, but, like flattery of the beloved, they were a recognized and necessary artificiality. In society, as in love, each person must sustain a role and help the other person to sustain his also. The play cannot go on if we substitute competition for emulation, trying to reduce and break down the roles of others instead of to elevate and to emulate them. Nor can the play be stimulating unless each person takes the trouble to make his own serio-comic performance before the world thoroughly distinctive. We do not appear before society psychologically naked; we dress for the part. We suppress all that is slovenly or inferior, whether in our clothes or in our behaviour, and we draw upon all that is most unique and attractive in ourselves in order to please and to impress. We attempt, in fact, to give "style" to our personality. This sense of style shows itself in a person's whole deportment, in his taste, good manners, and general discrimination, and its possession is an indication of his co-operative attitude to life. Society is a discipline through which we are led to the best exploitation or presentation of our qualities, which civilizes our psychic make-up and gives us the impetus to make all that we do or say bear an aesthetic stamp.

### *The "Good Mixer"*

When one reflects how greatly the subject of manners, etiquette and deportment occupied the minds of people even in

late Victorian times, what numerous books were written upon it, how, in a still earlier century, it was not unworthy even of the reflections of a La Rochefoucauld, the modern person's entire absence of interest in the matter is surely most astonishing. Here is a subject which still awaits its Freud, for there can be no doubt, to my mind, that the problem of social relationships, although still undiscovered and unrecognized, is fully as important as sex as a cause of uncertainty, frustration and discontent. Here also we find the symptoms which are typical of the frustrated attitude of mind—an over-valuation of the end to be attained and an accentuated striving towards it, which upsets a proper adaptation in both directions and is self-defeating.

Many writers, beginning with Nietzsche, have pointed out that this is an excessively gregarious age. Its mania for "getting together" is as remarkable as its hunger for love or its frenzy to perform useless work. People gravitate together because they cannot do without mutual support and confirmation, while the loss of attention to etiquettes and manners results in their failing to attain what they desire, in much the same way as it does in love. In consequence, man seems at last to reach the stage where he holds himself in a kind of terror. If he is forced to be alone, he does not know how to occupy himself, but must turn on the wireless. The fear of isolation breeds in him a spirit of dependence, and drives him to court popularity at all costs. In his desire to propitiate everybody he eagerly adopts the group's opinions, shows himself fearful of expressing himself in any unusual or original way and absurdly terrified of making enemies. Too great gregariousness is always coupled with conformity. The adaptability of the gregarious man is altogether too accommodating. He mistakes, in Jung's distinction, mere adjustment to others for a full and proper adaptation to life. If the secret of playing a role lies in the emphasis one places upon one's distinction—all one's special peculiarities of age, sex, class, race, personality being displayed and underlined—then the emphasis of modern man is upon sameness and upon the abolition of external differences as likely to cause offence. His personality, therefore, tends to become no more than a façade which is not illuminated by inner qualities, but casts an unoriginal reflection of whatever the crowd expects of him. He conforms, but he does not contribute, so that his individuality appears reduced and he becomes boring through his very

desire to please. The social ideal of gregariousness evidently defeats itself, for, if everyone behaves in a similar way, society ceases to offer the stimulation of which the individual stands in need.

This lack of a proper egoism accounts for many of the bad characteristics of which modern man<sup>1</sup> has been accused. It makes for superficiality, for suggestibility, for fickleness and easy excitability without emotional depth, all of which are also the traits most typical of crowds and mobs. It gives rise to that repression on which psychologists have so much dwelt. Because he does not trust himself, the promptings of his own nature and his general spontaneity of feeling are curbed in deference to whatever the group thinks or feels. The result is a loss of vital emotion and vital experience. Desires and instincts that come from within are disquieting phenomena to one who wishes to identify himself with the herd, and modern man will cling to reason as a defence against them. This makes him, indeed, very cautious and moderate in his approach to life, but it also means that he lives one-sidedly with the intellect alone. He seizes avidly upon any rational connection that can be established between two ideas and accepts it without bringing it to the bar of his own real experience. For all his rationalism, he is therefore extremely credulous and is easily led astray by catchwords, formulæ and empty intellectuality. Having no stable inner orientation, he tends to be equally fickle and undiscriminating in his judgments, shallow and uncertain in his emotions. He is too much at the mercy of outward impressions and generally accepted beliefs. The repression of his own nature may go so far that not infrequently his body also is despised and ignored. It is

<sup>1</sup> In default of a better expression, I am going to use the phrase "the modern man" throughout this essay to denote man as he has been influenced by the industrial and living conditions already described. Thus, by "modern" I do not necessarily mean contemporary. A Chinese coolie, an Indian philosopher, an American stockbroker may all be contemporaries, but they are not all in the same degree "modern", in the sense which I wish to give to the word. The mentality I describe will obviously be less true of a country like Spain, which has been less touched by industrialism, than of countries like England and the United States. What is specifically "modern" in any individual or in any community is always blurred and blended with personal, national and other characteristics. I beg the reader to bear in mind—lest he think I exaggerate—that I am presenting him with a composite picture of tendencies, not true of everybody nor ever to be met with in the undiluted extreme in any one person. The "modern" man, like the "economic" man, is a figment devised for the purposes of description.

remarkable how often, in modern estimation, the body is seen as a mere pillar to carry the head. No richness of sensation is derived from it, and its functions are not attended with pleasure. Its very wants often go unrecognized until it actually breaks down in illness. Or, perhaps, it is regarded on the analogy of a machine which it is economical to keep in proper running order, although attention to it is a tiresome waste of time. It is true, I think, that all modern man's perceptions are blunted or left untrained, and that he can neither see, hear, taste, smell with any acuteness—a fact which, among other things, accounts for his want of aesthetic sensibility.<sup>1</sup>

Jung has noticed some of these traits as characteristic of the extravert mentality and he regards the ideals of the time as biased in favour of the extravert. These ideals have been ably summarized by Freienfels,<sup>2</sup> who sees them as typical of the "American" mentality, since they are most noticeable in the United States where no tradition of privilege and status exists to counteract the industrial and democratic influences which produce them. He generalizes these ideals as "quantification, mechanization, standardization". He speaks of the credulous reverence for mere size and number, and the reduction of all values to matters of fact and statistic. This, it seems to me, is the obvious outcome of the gregarious spirit which would establish a criterion of value common to the largest number. In caste systems, truths and values are esoteric and carefully guarded, in aristocratic systems truths and values have an order of rank, but an egalitarian system gives rise to a purely exoteric culture which will inevitably be factual and statistical. In the same way, values which must be held in common by the largest number and patent to all can only be material values. Progress in wealth, comfort and efficiency, differences in sheer size and quantity can be universally understood where qualitative differences remain matters of individual taste and experience.

The ideal man of his time will therefore be he who incarnates these values in himself in the highest degree. He must first of all be a "good mixer". This in itself is in sharp contrast with former social ideals. In the medieval Christian world anonymity and seclusion were sought in order to allow for the cultivation of the unique qualities of the soul. This age abjures the soul, whose

<sup>1</sup> v. Freienfels: *Mysteries of the Soul*, for the majority of these accusations.

<sup>2</sup> Freienfels: *ibid.*

very name makes it uneasy, and concentrates instead upon social success. But it does not do so in the manner of the Renaissance, which prized the showy personality. The ideal of the "good mixer" is opposed to egoism, self-assertion and display. It demands an accommodating modesty and protestations of equality and similarity. Whatever stands distinguished and apart threatens the happy gregarious relationship and suffers a silent form of persecution. Hence it is that the snobbery of the coterie is apt to be frowned upon and is replaced by the larger intolerance of the herd. Protection is sought in numbers rather than elevation being sought through quality. It is the successful man rather than the powerful personality who is worshipped, because power implies a real distinction of quality, a difference and uniqueness of achievement, whereas success is only something quantitatively bigger than ordinary, the same thing with more noughts written after it or with greater mechanical efficiency. The successful man is only a reproduction of Everyman in gigantic proportions, the ideal example of the "good mixer", who remains modest and accessible to everybody yet incarnates all the modern virtues of size and quantity. The standard of individuality aimed at is not, as we have seen in discussing the problem of work, that of the lowest, but that of the average writ large. While it tends to continual debasement as far as quality goes, it is still something which raises the lowest while it degrades the highest. It is equally against distinction and baseness, and in favour of uniform mediocrity. All men shall be equal, composed of the same ingredients, easily assimilable to the same mould, brother consumers and producers of the mass-manufactured article. This is the economic basis of the social ideal of the "good mixer".

### *The "Individualist"*

In stressing the gregariousness of modern man, some writers have tended to overlook the opposite side of his nature and have produced a picture of him which is incomplete. He is also an individualist. It is the spirit of Victorian individualism which accounts for the fact that the study of manners is so neglected in our time. Manners are no longer thought to be necessary, for each person has only to be "himself". Manners are artificial, man should be sincere and natural. The idea that man has any

sort of role to play towards others in society is therefore treated with the same neglect as it is in connection with love.

Walter Bagehot has dwelt on the rigidity of manners in early societies and on the limitations which these impose upon the societies' development. Naturally, in an equalitarian society manners cannot be expected to be so highly-fashioned, nor will men hold themselves with the same aloofness and dignity as under a caste or aristocratic system. We need no longer demand the rigidity of etiquette of some earlier periods, and we can join with Bagehot in welcoming the end of such limitations. The excessive politeness of an aristocracy coupled with its roughness towards inferiors should obviously be replaced by a more general civility, and democratic manners are best if they are of the frank, simple and manly kind characteristic of the early days of American society.

But on the other hand it is difficult to see the total emancipation at present in vogue as a wholesome result of "the age of discussion". Social life is impossible unless it is upheld by some form and discipline, and the present reaction that would abolish these altogether simply ends in an anarchy which leaves the individual without a basis for his conduct. The uncertainty produced causes social relationships to degenerate into a question of competitive power-relationships. To take a simple example, "calling" has practically gone out of fashion, yet if one reflects on the consequences which follow the lapse of this social practice one will see how really necessary it was. So long as the practice survived, if one party made the gesture to call, the other was under the obligation to reciprocate, so that the prestige of each was kept on a level. Any failure to return a call was a perfectly plain but perfectly polite way of indicating that the acquaintanceship was not desired. But, once this ritual falls into disuse, a person's failure to respond to an overture may not mean that the acquaintance is not desired. It may imply mere forgetfulness, it may mean that the other person is being "informal" or "modern", but what it really means is uncertain. If the first person thereupon refuses to make further efforts, the acquaintanceship lapses for no real reason save that nobody will take the trouble to cultivate it, while, if he continues to make efforts, he risks being importunate and feels in the inferior position of having to run after the other. In these circumstances, our deep suspicion of each other becomes understandable. We

period or he is depressed by it. In either case his psychic adaptations are as swift, economical and unconscious as the physical adjustment of his stride to the nature of the terrain on which he happens to be walking. It is impossible to show by any sort of exact measurement the extent to which the decay of social life contributes to the frustration which man feels, but it can hardly be denied that the loss of that manner which raised our thoughts above pettiness and meanness furthers the collapse of our whole social psychology. The sense of uncertainty and competitive strain which characterizes any social gathering, the lack of those formalities which gave a certain support even to the dullest and made it difficult for anyone to feel excluded, mean that man reaps little psychic advantage from his contact with others. He does not return home feeling bigger, stronger or nobler than before, but only baffled and discouraged.

### *Modern Morality*

This diagnosis of modern manners may perhaps be supported by showing that modern morals have a similar character. Here, too, we find the symptoms of a relaxation of former standards balanced by a spirit of severe conformity. The Protestant religion introduced a kind of democracy into morals by substituting the liberty of the individual conscience for a morality dictated by authority. Nothing need be said against this liberty as a principle, but for it to remain a practicable method of moral regulation, an emphasis must be laid upon the word "conscience" fully as great as that which is laid upon the word "liberty", else this liberty will be bound to degenerate into licence. Once there was no longer an authoritative Church to issue commands, its commands had to become, as it were, "internalized" in each person as a sense of guilt or sin. This, I think, explains why the early Protestants found it necessary to lay such stress upon the all-seeing eye of God. Men who before had approached the Deity only through intermediaries such as priests and saints had now to feel themselves to be walking continually in His presence, and their strong faith and their conviction of sin safeguarded them from any anarchic use of their new freedom.

Unfortunately, the advance of science during the nineteenth century tended to discredit religious beliefs, while individual-

ism continued to flourish and to demand in ever stronger terms the right of each man to judge for himself. Each became answerable for his conduct, not to God, but to himself alone, so that morals were rendered more and more "relative". Moreover, this lack of external standards occurred just at the time when the individual was becoming disorientated from all his other traditions. As he was left without the protection of a master in his work and forced to fend for himself economically, so he was left without guidance in his spiritual life. He was cut off from his God, uprooted from his social ties, and turned loose into the great competitive urban jungles where the example of his neighbours and the opinion of the community in general could no longer be fully brought to bear upon him. At the same time, he had direct incentives to break loose from moral restraints. The frustration of his love life was undermining the sexual code, the narrowing of the home was taking away his sense of responsibility, the economics of over-production were breaking down the former austerity and thrift, and, together with State interference, leading to a greater degree of hedonism.

It can scarcely be marvelled at if all these influences have produced in our time an almost total relaxation of moral standards. This does not take the form of a strong revolt, for there is a lack of any strong authority to act as antagonist, and, as we have seen, man has been progressively weakened as he has been freed. Rather, there has been substituted for the Protestant faith and its awareness of sin an easy scepticism which practically obliterates the distinction between good and evil. To-day, guided by rationalism and its latest offspring, the fashionable teaching of psychoanalysis, we strive to bring up our children not to know moral conflict, we lay upon them no duties or burdens of any kind, we inculcate, not self-discipline, but self-expression, and we regard the conscience only as a source of repression and neurosis. However, if people are thus spared all moral conflict, their spiritual life will inevitably be further superficialized. Spiritually, modern man is entirely slack; he has given up trying to be better or to live up to any standard of perfection. The demands that were formerly made upon his moral nature have been lowered, just as his family and other responsibilities have been taken off his shoulders, and, in consequence, the very basis upon which the sense of worth can be cultivated has been removed. If there is no discrimination be-

tween right and wrong, if no action is deemed more unworthy than another, individuals exist at a dead level. Nothing they can do demeans them and likewise nothing can raise their self-esteem.

In spite of the absence of standards, we cannot accuse this age of being outstandingly immoral. If it were, one might be inclined to regard it with more respect, for immorality may sometimes be based on virtues, such as the courage and noble defiance which wins our sympathy for Milton's Satan, despite the author's intentions. But its skin-deep scepticism does not prevent this age from being in a certain sense exceptionally moral. It is as moral as it is gregarious and hard-working. Precisely because people have lost their traditional standards and have no moral certainty within themselves, they become extremely submissive to other people's opinion and fall beneath the tyranny of a certain conventionalism. Nowadays, manners appear to be far less free in certain respects than they were. It is, I think, the element of truth in psychoanalysis that people's lives are blighted by a sense of guilt which springs, not from fear of God, but from fear of the neighbour, so that each man walks in the consciousness of the eyes which peep from behind the window-curtains of the next-door house. Conversely, each is jealously resentful of anybody with the courage to go beyond the conventions to which he himself feels bound to conform, and does all he can to inhibit the spontaneity of others. Never, perhaps, has there been so much desire to justify one's every least action as inspired by laudable motives, nor more inquisitive talk of what the other person "ought" to do and more moral disapproval if he should happen to do something else. Whereas modern man is as incapable of experiencing a deep and serious moral tension as he is incapable, in the sexual sphere, of rising to the heights either of passion or of asceticism, the free expression of his personality is checked and inhibited at every point by the requirements of an absurd gentility.

The fundamental criticism of our age does not therefore hinge on the question of its "immorality", but on the low form of its morality. We have been told that all morality is herd-morality, and again, by Marxians and others, that it originates in the duplicity of rulers who wish to keep the common people under restraint. Morality is not herd-morality when it emanates from some superior authority. In former times it did originate

in the rulers, for it reflected the taste of the more civilized elements in society and gave to the uneducated a higher standard for their conduct than they would have been able to attain independently. But to-day, with the democratization of all values, morality certainly becomes of the herd. It is no longer the work of rulers, but springs from the psychology of the ruled, although it acts by making them all more governable.

Modern man, forced to be his own guide and philosopher, has inevitably pinned his own values to everything. He has constructed his own order of rank among the virtues, elevating to prominence those that dignify his particular way of life. Thus, his religion, from being one of fire and brimstone, has been transformed into one of milk and water. The texts he most approves are those which declare that we are members one of another, that all are equal, that all should bear each others burdens and do as they would be done by. Sound advice as such texts may possibly be, their choice emphasizes modern man's anxious desire for moderation and his hatred of all extremes. Modern man admires neither licentiousness nor asceticism, but wishes a sobriety which, while allowing him his enjoyment, is attended by no risks and makes for no distinctions. He sees no harm in comfort but disapproves of luxury. Although he thinks that each should be entitled to his opinion he is disquieted by extravagance. He pins his faith on reason and commonsense, for, as Nietzsche pointed out, these ensure that none shall go too far. His principal virtues—moderation, industry, kindness, modesty—are clearly designed to spare the weak and to keep the little man, *l'homme moyen sensuel*, in the forefront. They form the basis for that universal gregariousness among interchangeable human units which is the ideal of the time.

The tragedy of it is that the tyrant here is not anybody in particular but everybody in general—an invisible and all-pervasive tyrant, whose power is for that reason the harder to combat. No one has conquered this people, but they have conquered and reduced each other by a kind of insidious mutual frustration. For the insistence upon this set of commonplace virtues ends by blunting the sensibilities to the significance of higher virtues and greater strivings. No man can hope to expand morally without breaking through this encircling creed of

conformity to the average, and he will find himself constantly put in the wrong by having to fight beliefs so obviously acceptable from the point of view of good sense and right feeling. Who, after all, can deny that we should do as we would be done by or that modesty is a virtue? Nietzsche has pointed out how especially difficult it is for the great man to flourish in such an atmosphere. The very fact that he is in some ways superior to his fellows is bound to cause resistance in the heart of Everyman, who will put the dominant moral ideal in force against him. Every gesture the great man makes which is on a level with his greatness will be subject to disapprobation or derisive comment. It will be regarded as want of modesty, a false pose, an attempt to dominate, and the small man will set busily to work to undermine such pretensions.

We can see in the popular "debunking" biographies how continuous is the endeavour to reduce anything that surpasses ordinary limits to small causes and petty motives, to explain genius as the result of a childhood fixation or to dwell on those weaknesses in a great man which make him, after all, just "one of ourselves". Those who aspire to have any influence to-day must always pretend that they are less than they are, and must adopt the hypocrisy of writing down, speaking down, flattering and propitiating until the role of leadership becomes a positive debasement and the leader himself reacts with contempt and cynicism towards those who expect him to play it. In the words of Professor Dewey: "We praise even our most successful men, not for their ruthless and self-centred energy in getting ahead, but because of their love of flowers, children and dogs, or their kindness to aged relatives. Anyone who frankly urges a selfish creed of life is everywhere frowned upon. Along with the disappearance of the home and the multiplication of divorce in one generation by 600 per cent., there is the most abundant and sentimental glorification of the sacredness of the home and the beauties of constant love that history can record. We are surcharged with altruism and bursting with the desire to serve others."<sup>1</sup> Moral licence and moral conformity are indeed strangely intermingled. Man is weakened both by what he believes and by what he disbelieves, by his timid adherence to the less exacting virtues and by his facile scepticism of right and wrong.

<sup>1</sup> Dewey: *Individualism Old and New*, p. 17. .

*The Position of the Intellectuals*

The decline in manners and in morals is only a particular illustration of the general principle which I am here putting forward, namely, that the society in which we live is unfavourable to individual expansion of whatever kind. It seeks to reduce to an average, and, in doing so, it eliminates the best among strivings and among people as surely as economically it lowers the quality of goods. This can be emphasized by pointing to the fate of the intellectual leaders of the society, who are gradually denuded of their positive functions, so that they come to hold a completely inorganic position in the life of their time. The intellectuals exist to represent those things which raise man to his highest point; they are, therefore, the first to feel the effects of the lack of interest in culture, the absence of taste and style, and the general ugliness and sordidness which characterize our environment. They are faced by an age which is extraverted in its behaviour, exoteric in all its moral and aesthetic values, seeking only material comfort, admiring only a quantitative form of success, jealous alike of all flights of the soul and all baroque exaggerations of the personality. They are in natural opposition to such standards, and they have accordingly lost their leadership in these matters as surely as the aristocrats have lost their leadership in the conduct of life.

The effect upon the intellectuals is primarily one of loss of morale, due to the loss of spiritual contact with the life around them. On a higher plane than the average, they are quite as disorientated as anyone else, and feel acutely their inability to offer any solutions to the problems of their age. Being far from secure in their social position and far from firm in their convictions, they tend to assume a pontifical attitude of infallibility, exaggerating their superiority to counteract their sense of isolation and futility. Inevitably, they tend to diverge on paths of their own, forming small cliques of cognoscenti, which quarrel among themselves until whatever remains of a cultural tradition is further broken up. While they are thus driven towards isolation and mutual destruction, one sees them occasionally make abrupt descents into gregariousness, volunteering, perhaps, as a soldier in the hope of ending their isolation and gaining some experience and contact with the generality of society, or, as occurred before the war, setting a fashion

in praising the collective life and joining some revolutionary party.

In accepting a political—or sometimes a religious—credo below the niveau of their own intelligence, the intellectuals perhaps seek also to rid themselves of the crushing burden of their own scepticism. For they have become in course of time completely Hamletized, and present an effect of extreme introversion in contrast to the extraverted ideals of the age. In them, as in the people, rationalism has had debilitating moral effects. Unable to answer "yes" or "no" on any subject, they confine themselves to qualifying every statement presented by others and have fallen into habits of hyper-criticism which discourage creative effort. Although they are often knowledgeable, well-intentioned and industrious, yet these qualities are not enough so long as they use them thus only for a negative end. It is understandable if their realization of this self-imposed tyranny should lead them in the end to embrace the more positive dogmas of the people. What they seek is principally relief from themselves, change for the sake of change, and even some kind of violence. But their concessions to the gregarious spirit are doomed to remain ineffectual, and their exalted enthusiasms are apt to be followed by disillusionment and a return into haughty isolation. These are a departure from their true nature and the people are apt to be suspicious of their sincerity. However admirable their personal qualities, the intellectuals have become, and must needs remain, a set of *déracinés*, who are represented as being more cultivated, fastidious and condescending than is decent for the ordinary man of the day.

In the novels of Mr. Huxley there is nearly always a figure which represents some aspect of the modern intellectual and his dilemma. Perhaps the most telling of these portraits, and the easiest to quote as illustration, is that of Antony Beavis in *Eyeless in Gaza* (1936), who is shown as constantly seeking to make contact with the life about him and who is as constantly repelled and driven back into himself by its vulgarity. Half-hearted and discouraged even before he begins, preoccupied with the guilty feeling that he "ought" to like other people or that he "ought" to be more useful, his diary is a highly introspective monologue of doubts and hesitations, of moralizing, rationalizing, qualifying. " 'Besetting sin'—can one still use the term? No. It has too many unsatisfactory overtones and im-

plications—blood of the lamb, terrible thing to fall into the hands of the living God, hell-fire, obsessions with sex, offences, chastity instead of charity. . . . No, one can't use the phrase or think in the terms it implies. But that does not mean, of course, that persistent tendencies to behave badly do not exist or that it isn't one's business to examine them objectively and try to do something about them." "Self-knowledge an essential preliminary to self-change. (Pure science and then applied.) That which besets me is indifference. I can't be bothered about people. Or rather, won't. For I avoid, carefully, all occasions for being bothered. A necessary part of the treatment is to embrace all bothersome occasions one can, to go out of one's way to create them. Indifference is a form of sloth. For one can work hard, as I've always done, and yet wallow in sloth; be industrious about one's job, but scandalously lazy about all that isn't one's job. Because, of course, the job is fun. Whereas the non-job—personal relations in my case—is disagreeable and laborious. . . . The problem is; how to love? Once more the word is suspect, greasy from being fingered by too many generations of Stiggenses. There ought to be some way of dry-cleaning words. Love, purity, goodness, spirit—a pile of dirty linen waiting for the laundress. How then, to—not to love, since it's an unwashed handkerchief—feel, say, persistent affectionate interest in people?" In such passages as these Mr. Huxley paints a picture of the intellectuals' mental and emotional paralysis. Creative achievement could not possibly survive this loss of spontaneity, this perpetual qualification of the simplest words and ideas, this endeavour to avoid seeming vulgar by couching notions in a pseudo-scientific jargon of "persistent tendencies", this preoccupation with "oughts" and "don'ts" in an age when sin and virtue and every moral standard have gone out of fashion. It is a pathetic picture. The character wanders in the personal maze of his own scepticism and "objectivity", and consciousness has become almost "a disease".

If intellectuals suffer like this, it is because, being what they are, they have "opinions", and nobody has any longer a use for private opinion. Just as good taste is a social nuisance in the eyes of the manufacturer of standardized goods, so opinions prevent the assimilation of everyone to a general pattern. The people are averse to hearing themselves criticized, and desire to listen only to those crudely robust leaders who sing their praises

and comfort them with promises. No patronage for those with opinions is forthcoming from the masters, who are beginning to know very well their own business of organizing and commanding, and on whom any exhortations fall as vainly as the words of a prophet on a hard-boiled Hebrew tyrant. Wherever they still cling precariously to the fringe of society, wherever, that is to say, they have not been annihilated wholesale by dictators, the intellectuals exhibit this extraordinary sense of guilt at their own ineffectiveness, and their continual criticism of themselves and of each other gives a clear picture of how mutual frustration works almost as a natural process to secure a reduction of individuality. For what we are witnessing to-day is beyond doubt the suffering incidental to an adjustment at a lower level. There could be no more obvious symptom of our contracting social life than the presence of those hundreds of young graduates, stuffed with knowledge, often of wide general culture, for whom there are no opportunities but to become a schoolmaster or reviewer. For want of application, the learning of these young men goes on accumulating inside them, acting as an irritant and a depressant, and wherever they go they are condemned to carry their culture about with them like a hump.

One must, of course, make an exception to what has been said in the case of the scientific specialist, who is in a rather more fortunate position. He may bring profit to some industrial undertaking or he devises a new lethal weapon for the government or contributes in some way to the comfort of the people. By all classes his usefulness, at least, is well understood, and his pronouncements as an expert are treated with veneration. The scepticism and rationalism of the period are here more in place and the quantitative approach of science is in harmony with general prejudices.

But as the vulgarity of the crowd increases and science becomes more refined and complex, the scientist also moves away from contact with society into realms where none can follow him. To the man in the street, the modern physicists, for instance, appear like a band of intellectual steeplejacks precariously perched on a giddy scaffolding of paradoxes. Undoubtedly, this "space-time anguish", as Dali aptly calls it, is one of the unique distinctions of our age, while specialization in general has brought us and continues to bring us the most wonderful results. All the same, the characteristic faults of specialization

are making themselves felt and its evils are generally admitted. Specialization also works against individuality. The specialist is the antithesis of the *uomo universale*. He is not a complete human being, with all aspects of his nature equally developed. Just like the contemporary average man, he lives solely with the analytical side of his brain and has an impoverished emotional life and a stunted understanding for general and social questions. "Specialism," says Hobhouse, "is learning divorced from its social purpose, destitute of large and generous ideas, worse than useless as a guide to the problems of national life, smothering the humanities in cartloads of detail, unavoidable, but fatal to the intellect."<sup>1</sup>

From the standpoint of those who looked to science to further the general welfare of society, the narrow outlook of the scientist has proved a disappointment and the judgment of the "expert" sounds increasingly ironical. The expert's work tends to escape from the social focus, to pursue a course of its own inadequately related to the aspirations of the time, so that we become the slave rather than the master of our inventions. The expert tends even to lose contact with research in other fields than his own, so that the co-ordinating purpose of science is lost to view and the exponents of the various branches of learning spend their time in contradicting each other in public to the further confusion of everybody. Moreover, the farther the scientist pursues his speciality, the more dubious appear the possibilities of reaching any conclusion, until the attitude to truth becomes a negative one and the habit of qualification and scepticism becomes engrained. Truth is no longer regarded as to be gained by the insight of the genius, who is able to look past particulars and to select the more universal and profound aspects of a problem. Truth, for the scientist, is to be attained by the subtraction of error. He proceeds by constant qualification and commendation of the work of his predecessors, by means of small summations and gradual approximations. Even in science, where such a method is most in place, this by itself is insufficient. It leads, as Hobhouse says, to the creative mind being overwhelmed in detail and to a loss of the courage to think independently and the ability to take a broad and ample view of life. Science, like the rest of our affairs, then comes to be worked by committees, and an edifice is reared by the activities

<sup>1</sup> L. T. Hobhouse: *Democracy and Reaction*, p. 83.

of a thousand burrowing ants. It is to all these reasons that we must attribute that smallness of spirit which is noticeable in most scientists. They succeed in the modern world precisely because they have offered it the oblation of their individuality. Outside this work, they have generally neither opinions nor personality, but they live their lives, in Nietzsche's phrase, as "faithful recording instruments and calculating machines".

However, it is fair to add that the analytical and atomistic tradition which ruled in all spheres of life and thought during the nineteenth century is being gradually left behind. Just as there are the beginnings of a tendency towards economic and social integration—noticed at the end of the first chapter—so scientific thought is moving towards a more "holistic" treatment of each subject and towards a more synoptic grasp of the interrelatedness of subjects. This is perhaps the way in which the disorientation of research can be overcome and the precedence of the truly creative mind re-established.

### *The Position of the Artists*

Naturally, it is in art that we see the most sensitive reaction to modern conditions. The incessant stimulation which our civilization offers seems to have blunted our senses to whatever is fine and delicate, so that, as already pointed out, modern man reacts less easily to aesthetic appeals. Ordinarily, he pays little attention to the words of the book he is reading, to the notes of the music he is hearing or to the tones and colours of the pictures at which he is looking, so that ever stronger effects are required in order to elicit any response. Concomitant with this sensory impoverishment goes an emotional impoverishment due to all the causes I have outlined, to our extraverted habits and pursuit of material goals, to our moral slackness, to our erotic weakness. This sensory and emotional impoverishment ends in a loss of capacity for artistic appreciation amounting at times to a feeling almost of nervous irritability in people confronted with anything requiring a certain repose and concentration before it can be assimilated. The music, literature and painting of former ages is in general pitched in too subtle a key for our modern sensibility and cannot be understood unless it is broken up and offered in small doses, interspersed with comments which tell people what they ought to think about it.

In default of sensibility, modern man must call upon his intellectual faculties to aid in appreciation, and he will readily accept what is put before him so long as he is given a "reason" for it. However well-intentioned are the efforts of those engaged in diffusing culture, I do not think these efforts will meet with more than superficial success so long as people react with their intellect only and are unable to absorb art as vital experience.

Art, in advanced societies, seems to flourish best when backed by a cultured and intelligent patronage, such as is generally to be found in a stable upper class. It is the desire to please and to entertain which binds the artist to his community, and he will succeed in this only so long as those whom he addresses hold much the same set of values as himself. The artist with a worth-while patron can portray this patron in his features, his style of living and his beliefs in a way that makes these seem yet nobler. The patron is gratified by the picture and the artist feels his unity with his contemporaries affirmed. But when the patron is on a lower level of culture than the artist, the desire to please comes into conflict with the need for honest self-expression. Art and entertainment must then go opposite ways. The cheap and cynical spirits remain to flatter the moneyed client, while the true artist, no longer able to express himself in the terms desired, drifts into a defiant Bohemianism. Isolated from society, his aesthetic statements cease to be affirmative. He becomes critical of contemporary values and assertive of himself and his pure artistic values. Eccentricity of expression and Bohemianism of life become virtues which denote that he is not pandering to the public like his venal brethren of the Academies. The desire to please is replaced by the desire to shock. Much of his work is devoted to revealing the underside of life, and, concentrated so much on "self-expression", he inevitably falls into subjective individualism.

The artist finds, not only that he has lost contact with society but that art has been driven back upon itself by the encroachments on its sphere of science and the machine. Its root in craftsmanship has been withered, and it has become separated from ornamentation and the fulfilment of secondary use-values. The need for painting to be representational ceased when the camera was invented, and even the novel of character shows signs of succumbing when the psychologist appears with his case-book. The field of artistic activities is thus constantly nar-

rowed until it becomes something highly technical to do with pure form and aesthetic emotion. No doubt it may be argued that it gains by being thus stripped of its inessentials. However that may be in the long run, it certainly tends to specialize the artist in the same way as the scientist is specialized and to set him in a class apart.

Attention should be called especially to the difficulties of the minor artist to-day, for in the new struggle for the survival of individuality he is the first to be eliminated. In the past, the minor artist, even if not brilliantly talented or—as most are not—of very high intellectual power, could still live a modest and useful life in fulfilling those secondary use-values of which I have just spoken. He was at least a good craftsman and he often found himself borne up by a powerful tradition which made of his work something greater than his natural talents alone could have achieved. But when art drifts into non-conformity, this tradition also dies. At first the artists, as they did all through Victorian times, make desperate efforts to recover it. They feel that if standards are lacking in the present, they must turn all the more to those of the past. But a tradition is not maintained in this way. An artist does not "continue" a tradition; he makes it, and he does so only by identifying himself with the life of the present. To seek one's values in the past because one can no longer be affirmative in relation to those of the present transmits no new link in the tradition to the future. Its only result is an eclecticism which disintegrates the tradition further. Each artist will choose from the past his own standpoint. Each will make an individualist use of the tradition, which inevitably gives rise to rival sects and schools and ends in disorientation, while the criticism thus engendered leads off towards intellectualist preoccupations and loss of spontaneity. Finally, when the resources of eclecticism are used up, the artist makes a clean break with the past and his desire to shock and to criticize find vent in revolutionary movements.

The minor artist, therefore, has now to show a degree of independence and intellectual power in order to master the esoteric theories of the schools which he probably does not possess. In the absence of the tradition, he has not the ability to create something out of nothing, and although he may follow his greater contemporaries in their revolutionary iconoclasm, he generally has only a vague grasp of what it is all about.

Moreover, the public does not appreciate minor work, however honest. It is not impressed by modest achievement, but only by the overwhelming personality which has continually new statements to offer. It is expected, in fact, that every artist, instead of being a humble executant working within a tradition, shall be an "individual", with a unique and significant form of self-expression and a *Weltanschauung* all his own.

This restless craze for novelty in the public encourages the artist to waste his time in technical tricks. While there is great emphasis nowadays on the problems of technique, this technique is generally not understood as the carefully wrought craftsmanship of earlier times, designed to make the work endure to perpetuity, but as the shortest and most economical way in reaching a given effect. It becomes a means of putting across a slick idea and its deliberate eccentricity becomes a virtue which the artist calls his "style". The public admires only that work which carries in its style a sort of trade-mark or signature which is easily recognizable and enables people otherwise without discrimination to exclaim, "Ah! That is So-and-So's painting. How typical!" Many artists while without real virtuosity, have nevertheless each his limited repertoire of tricks, his single eccentricity. In democratic societies, as de Tocqueville wrote long ago, "artists will aim at rapidity of execution more than at perfection of detail, there will be more wit than erudition, more imagination than profundity, the object will be to astonish rather than to please, and to stir the passions more than to charm the taste".<sup>1</sup>

Style is an excellent indication of the social changes which are taking place in any period. During the expansive age of romantic discovery the style was, in Tocqueville's phrase, "fantastic, incorrect, overburdened and loose, but almost always vehement and bold".<sup>2</sup> The artists of that time had broken away from the eighteenth century's social conception of art and had embraced the Victorian creed of individualism. While the manufacturer was proclaiming *laissez-aller* in commerce and pushing vigorously outward in quest of material profit, the artists were talking of art for art's sake and pushing inward towards the new territory of the subjective self. Everything this individual self offered, however bizarre, was material for their art, which re-

<sup>1</sup> Alexis de Tocqueville: *Democracy in America*. Pt. II. Bk. 1, Ch. 13 (1846).

<sup>2</sup> *ibid.*

flected in its overburdened style the wealth of the new discoveries and the reckless eagerness of the discoverer. To-day, however, this individualism seems to be exhausted, to have turned sour on us, and to have sunk into a tortuous subjectivity. With the loss of positive values to assert and of new discoveries to make, creative work becomes overshadowed by intellectualist preoccupations, and style, losing its exuberance, becomes cryptic, shortened, and self-centred, in line with the general contractive atmosphere of the time.

Even the greatest artists seem now to conceive in pain and bitterness. Discouraged by the prevailing atmosphere of the time, they lack ease in their greatness, and in their striving after achievement are often too tyrannical with themselves. One can almost hear the harsh grating as James Joyce wrings greatness out of his very bones. Such men go in their work to the most uncompromising lengths against society. Born, as he said of himself, to be "elusive of all religious and social orders", Joyce seems to have spent his life shut up in his cubist box, and, when he expanded his work, it was not so much in the direction of society as by adding another dimension to his box and retiring still further into space-time. Bound down by pedantry, pre-occupied by technical tricks, alternating in mood between sentimentality and brutality, schizoid and introverted to a degree, his work seems to retain its peculiar significance as much on account of the typicality of its faults and the feeling of the period which they convey as on account of the scathing characterization of the *homme moyen sensuel*, who the modern artist is beginning to realize is his worst enemy. Negatively, in his refusal to please his age, positively in his satirical attacks upon it, Joyce shows the revolt of the artist, and his work is a concrete example of all the characteristics which I have been endeavouring to describe.

Likewise the surrealists found a formula for attack upon the conformity and mediocrity which the little man seeks to impose on life. Originating from the extreme nihilism of post-war Dada, surrealism came at length to form a more organized platform of opposition and has maintained for the last twenty years what it calls<sup>s</sup> "an aesthetic civil war" against its period. As the tail end of the romantic movement—"but a remarkably prehensile tail"<sup>1</sup>—it carried the vehement and fantastic style,

<sup>1</sup> André Breton.

described by de Tocqueville, and the exploration of the subjective self to their logical limits. Against the rationalism of the modern man it emphasized pure irrationality. In place of his good sense, it allowed itself to go to any extreme to which the unfettered imagination could carry it. The surrealists offered an age of utilitarianism the gift of the utterly useless article. They denied aestheticism as a plot to keep the artist's spontaneity in chains. In imitating in their work the mental processes of the lunatic they sought to parody the state of collective insanity at which this civilization has arrived. It would, however, be to misrepresent them to suggest that they were exclusively occupied with negative criticism. Their emphasis upon the imagination has been of real service in freeing artists from the freezing influence of intellectualist criticism, and they have undoubtedly managed to widen the field of art by rendering objectively states of consciousness, emotions, sensations whose subtlety has hitherto defied representation—states, for instance, of worry and anxiety in Miro, of vacancy and psychic tension in Magritte, of anguish in Dali, and of all sorts of nightmares in the bold and tender paintings of Max Ernst. Decidedly, therefore, neither here nor in the splintered anger of some of Picasso's cubism nor in the whorls of Joyce's superimposed planes of meaning can art be considered as having lost its vivacity.

### *Summary*

There are many aspects of the contemporary scene which it has not been possible to touch upon here, but they would, if space allowed for their consideration, only serve to confirm the picture I wish to draw. It is a picture of a society which seems to be closing down upon the individual, stifling his initiative, levelling him off. It suffers from the creeping paralysis of conformity, gentility and want of character. It suffers equally from an opposite set of tendencies which began with the lapse of tradition in manners, morals, art and other spheres of life and which gathers momentum in a movement towards violence, brutality, sensationalism and anarchy.

From the point of view of the individual, which is what we are considering here, we must try to imagine the sense of mental disorientation which these facts cause in him. A society might

be called "ordered" when, in spite of differences in upbringing and education, all classes share roughly the same ideals and appear to be moving towards the same goal. But in this society, the spiritual atmosphere is one of seeming chaos, with every class and group, even every individual, pulling in a different direction. Just as work has been deprived of its meaning, so the whole society appears to have no common centre or point of striving, but to live a prey to its own antagonisms, ruled by political, economic and psychological forces beyond its control. Such a state of affairs leaves the individual with no support for his personal life. He exists in a state of intense mental insecurity where men, in spite of their gregariousness, are all enemies of one another, where no job is safe, no tradition solid, no belief to be relied upon. Joined to this uncertainty is the depressing effect of an environment morally mediocre and physically sordid. Art and culture, which normally exist to affirm the values and ideals of the period and to stimulate and inspire men to a higher belief in themselves, now have nothing to say to the ordinary person and have more or less separated themselves from his environment. Accordingly, the ordinary person has little left to bind him to the community. He is gradually incapacitated from behaving as a social being, becoming both more of an individualist and more of a creature of the herd.

## PART II



## INDIVIDUALITY

*What is Individuality?*

INDIVIDUALITY means wholeness—literally, “that which cannot be divided”. Science, which is analytical, is always looking for the simplest particulars or wholes beyond which further division is impossible. In physics, for instance, matter is split up into its individual atoms in order to discover how their arrangement and combination produce the different elements. In social psychology, the subject-matter is society, and the smallest units into which this subject-matter can be divided are its individual human beings. The social problem, as I see it, is to learn to understand the inter-relationships between the whole and the parts. We must try to find out how the social whole influences the mentality of the individuals who experience it, and, conversely, how this mentality contributes to produce changes in the form and evolution of the society itself.

But individuality has a second meaning, especially when used in connection with human beings. It denotes uniqueness. Unlike atoms, human beings are not repetitive particles, but each has a character or identity which could not in any way be duplicated. Here, perhaps, lies the fundamental difference between a science like physics, which deals with the inorganic, and one like psychology, which deals with living things. It dictates that they shall have different methods. The units of physics, being all exactly alike, can be added together, subtracted or divided to form a quantitative science. But the units which compose a society are different qualitatively and cannot be treated in a numerical fashion. Physics, we may say, is an abstract, exact, mathematical science dealing with hypothetical particulars which conform to statistical laws; psychology is a science dealing with concrete particulars subject only to tendencies and qualitative changes.

I have talked a great deal in the first part of this book about the suppression of individual uniqueness, giving it to be under-

stood that I consider this to be the prime cause of our social discontent. What we have to do in this chapter is to examine the nature of individuality rather more formally, to mark its qualitative changes and to show how the influence of such changes affect the course of social events.

### *The Cognitive Basis of Individuality*

According, then, to our definition, a man is not an individual unless he is in some way unique and entire. His thoughts, feelings, strivings must be characteristic and differentiated, presenting a picture of belonging to him and to no one else. How far this uniqueness and entirety are reached in the life of any particular man is, of course, a matter only of degree. An absolute individuality does not exist, and it is only in comparison with others that we appear as more or less independent and differentiated.

Individuality, since it implies entirety, must logically be the product of the development of the whole man. It has its basis both in his rational faculties and in his affective life. On the side of his reason, it is obvious, for instance, that a certain degree of intellectual capacity will be required before the fact of one's separate existence can be recognized and the process of differentiation can begin. No animal lives in the consciousness of a distinct Ego, and, although it may have a few characteristic personality traits, its strivings can hardly be said to be organized and integrated together to form an individual. A mental defective is also not fully an individual, if his strivings produce only a random activity. Neither is a baby, whose movements are still unco-ordinated and which has not learned to distinguish what belongs to itself from what belongs to the outside world.

A further and very instructive example is that of the primitive. According to modern anthropology, the primitive, like the child, lacks the instruments of conceptual thought which would allow him to conceive of himself as an individual. "There is an almost total absence of generic terms to correspond with general ideas," says Lévy-Bruhl, "and on the other hand an extraordinary abundance of specific terms. . . . The Tasmanians had no words to represent abstract ideas, and although they could denote every variety of gum-tree or bush by name,

they had no word for tree."<sup>1</sup> In the absence of these generic terms, the thinking of the primitive must be of a concrete kind. If he has not attained to the idea of "tree" as apart from any particular kind of tree, far less will he be able to visualize such abstractions as "courage" or "individuality". He will think of courage only in the shape of the courageous man, whose flesh he will eat in order to acquire that courage. A particular gum-tree will seem to him a manifestation of the gum-tree in general, not, as we see it, as an individual member of its species. He confuses, in fact, the substance with its attributes, and the particular with the general, and he will be a prey to all the other errors of thought from which our logic protects us.

Lévy-Bruhl shows that the outlook of the primitive on the relation of animals to their species manifests a precisely similar confusion. The animals of a species are regarded as simultaneously both one and many, an attitude of mind which still finds an echo in our own fairy stories, where Renard is the name not only of an individual fox but of the species itself, which, if killed, may, without inconsistency from this point of view, come alive again even in the same story to continue its adventures. If the primitive feels called upon to propitiate an animal slain in the chase, it is not because he fears the vengeance of the actual carcase at his feet, but because species and individual participate in the same life, and what is done to one is felt by all. If he is nipped by a crocodile, this is no doubt because he has offended the crocodile, taken in its collectivity. Each instance of the species is for him but a manifestation of the whole species.

In like manner will he view the relation between the human individual and his society. Our own sense of individuality is arrived at by integrating and differentiating it from all that lies outside it. The primitive's idea of himself is both vague and illimitable, more restricted in some ways than our own, in others richer and more expanded. To the primitive, any absolute separation of himself as an entity is inconceivable. He feels himself part of the general life of his tribe, and the life of the tribe as not separate from that of the whole environment. "A native so thoroughly identifies himself with his tribe that he is ever employing the first personal pronoun. In mentioning a fight which occurred possibly ten generations ago, he will say, 'I defeated the enemy here', mentioning the name of the tribe.

<sup>1</sup> *How Natives Think*, (p. 170).

In like manner he will carelessly indicate 10,000 acres of land with a wave of his hand, and remark, 'This is my land'. He would never suspect that any person would take it that he was the sole owner of such land, nor would any but a European make such an error."<sup>1</sup> The instances of this state of mind are multitudinous. Punishment, for instance, is not exacted of the culpable person but of the group to which he belongs, and, in the case of any offence against the supernatural powers, it is thought that the whole group must make atonement for the fault of one. The primitive, in fact, regards his relations with his group in the same light as he regards the relation of particular animals and plants to their species. What is done to one is felt by all. The members of the tribe seem to coalesce in a kind of mental frog spawn, in which, indeed, there are nuclear elements, but not ones that have as yet been hatched into independent existence.

One can well agree with Nietzsche's dictum that "throughout the longest period of the life of mankind there was nothing more terrible to a person than to feel himself independent. To be alone, to feel independent, neither to obey nor to rule, to represent an individual—that was no pleasure to a person then, but a punishment; he was condemned 'to be an individual'."<sup>2</sup> During all this time, society would continue, like its components, as something undifferentiated, homogeneous, and amorphous. There would be the barest minimum of organization, no division into classes, no specialization of labour, no private property, no closely-knit family units, scarcely a glimmer of original thought. The concept of the individual can only begin to grow when all these characteristic traits of a complex society show signs of developing. Once established, individuality then appears to undergo a kind of efflorescence. Not only do human beings become individualized, but all the objects and beings around them are endowed with anthropomorphic attributes. We are in the animistic stage, where every tree and rock has its separate personality and the monistic conception of Nature is gradually transformed into a pantheon of gods.

### *The Historical Development of Individuality*

The primitive is not a mental defective; he has the same human power to reason as ourselves, and can show himself as

<sup>1</sup> Elsdon Best: *The Maori*, Vol. I, p. 341.

<sup>2</sup> *The Joyful Wisdom*, p. 161. (Allen and Unwin Ed.)

quick-witted as a European on certain occasions. But he is limited by the lack of the instruments of thought available in his society. We, on the other hand, are born into a world which already possesses the concept of individual uniqueness. We derive our idea of it from our society rather than from ourselves. The concept is one that has shown continuous growth and change throughout the centuries, and a brief sketch of its history will perhaps help us to understand its meaning more clearly.

In our civilization one may distinguish three distinct conceptions of individuality, conceptions which, in the course of time, have partly superseded, partly overlaid each other, often with confusing results. When, for instance, we speak of our individuality or identity persisting after death, we are thinking primarily of ourselves as "souls". On another occasion, however, we may speak of a man as having a "strong individuality", and then we mean something quite different. Here, our term is almost synonymous with personality, although we should probably admit, if we stopped to think, that a man's personality does not altogether include all that we mean by his individuality. The outward "persona" or "mask" of a man, the character which he reveals to the world, is only an aspect of his total being, and there needs to be included also, as Jung includes it, the "anima" or inward man or "soul" which we also feel him to possess. Lastly, we use the term in a still narrower sense, as when we say that each man should have equal rights as an individual, implying nothing thereby as to his soul or personality, and regarding him simply as a member of society and hence qualified to participate in certain social advantages.

In the course of our evolution, we have thus acquired at least three different conceptions of the individual, which naturally makes it impossible to give any set definition of the term. These different conceptions have all predominated for a time within the society, and have set different styles or norms of what a man should be, thereby determining the direction of his development. Under their influence, men have attempted to differentiate themselves at one time as souls, at another as personalities, at another as individualists, and their strivings have produced three great social phases which one might perhaps call, after Vico, the divine, the heroic and the human. Let us contrast and compare them.

The pattern of the divine phase was, of course, set by Christian thought. Christianity arose to preach monotheism in opposition to that decaying pantheon of gods which, as we have noticed, developed out of the first conceptions of individuality. It was also, as many authors have pointed out, something like an anti-imperialist and proletarian revolt within the Roman world. It originated on the borders of the Empire and spread through the dependencies of Asia Minor to revive the outworn spiritual life at the centre, much as nowadays some similar movement might percolate from India into London. It prophesied the destruction of Roman power in polemical allegories, declared that the meek should inherit the earth, and preached internationalism and universal brotherhood to the subject peoples.

Christian God and Roman Emperor were rivals almost from the start for the favour of the masses, and continued so even into the Middle Ages. To the Roman who remained loyal to his aristocratic creed of rulership the new doctrine must have seemed not only subversive of social order but morally ignoble. He saw Reason overthrown, and the superstitions from which classicism had laboriously rescued man revived and concentrated upon the person of a semi-Egyptian deity. He could not be expected to understand so complete a reversal of all accepted values as that which substituted the equality and brotherhood of polyglot man for his own pride in his racial superiority, which glorified the slaves' humility in place of the desire to rule, and preferred chastity, and even castration, to a sound virility.

Nevertheless, it would be quite untrue to regard the new religion, as Nietzsche held, as in any way opposed to individuality. It was an enormous extension of it to masses who previously had not been permitted the right to any kind of self-development. The slave now learned for the first time that, however insignificant from the worldly point of view, he was on a level with his master in the eyes of God. He was taught that humility, subservience and the passive virtues to which he had been condemned were not contemptible and would find their reward in the world to come. Christianity was dominated by the desire to raise the moral and spiritual significance of the ordinary man. It did so by providing each person with a unique and indestructible soul which, irrespective of outward rank and circumstance, placed all upon an equality. True worth came from

God; all worldly power and prestige emanating from the Emperor were so much vanity. By means of miracles and martyrdom, the Christians were prepared to demonstrate the superiority of this inward spiritual power over secular power. At the same time a new set of moral duties was laid down to provide a discipline for the life of man. Much of the appeal of Christianity undoubtedly lay in the enormous new demands it made upon the individual's moral nature in a time when life had little purpose beyond bread and circuses.

If individuality is extended in this way to everyone, then it has to be of an inward or quietistic kind, else society would collapse. A "weak" or "subjective" individuality may be allowed to everybody, a "strong" one must always be restricted by privilege to a few. Society has never yet been in a position where its organization could absorb the unrestricted development of all sides of everyone's nature. It has always been confronted by the choice of allowing to each a partial and equal development or of curtailing the majority for the greater expansion of the minority. The first brings democracy—early Christian or secular—the second hierarchy, each with its appropriate set of beliefs and procedures. For more than a thousand years the Church, therefore, battled against the Roman hierarchic system of values. It kept its face set against worldly rank and power, condemned possessions and ostentatious display, and tried to extirpate the passions. It demanded meekness, obedience, self-sacrifice, patience, passivity in suffering, asceticism. It crushed out classical culture and transformed art from the realistic and the sensuous into the abstract and symbolic. Style became vertical instead of horizontal, pointing directly towards Heaven. In the monasteries, the brothers divested themselves of all contact with the real world, even exchanging their names for religious pseudonyms and dressing in indistinguishable habits and cowls which hid them from sight. The tendency to self-effacement was so strong that, as Burckhardt has remarked, art is anonymous and we do not even know by hearsay the names of the architects and builders of the great cathedrals. Man became simply a unit in his group or guild, a peasant or craftsman hardly distinguishable from other peasants and craftsmen.

Christianity tended, in fact, to the complete nullification of

on the Gothic Cathedrals. Similarly the ideal of the Renaissance is not the dehumanized saint, but the humanist such as More or Erasmus, polished, tolerant and strong, or the *uomo universale* of Leonardo, or the fiery man of *virtù*. Men are no longer abstractions of various virtues and vices, but their souls and bodies seem to come together once again upon the plane of reality.

In its youthful cynicism, its romantic dreams, its adventurous Caesarism, the Renaissance often appears to us as a very naïve age. It was, indeed, the adolescence of Europe, which broke with the authority of God the Father and looked out upon the world for the first time. For that reason it was a great advance upon the system of antitheses, the hairsplitting dogmas, and the childish nightmares of the age which had preceded it. What the Renaissance achieved was a return to the realism of classical times coupled with a romanticism which was all its own. Art now returned to the horizontal, sculpture was based on the study of anatomy, realistic portrait painting was developed, perspective and *trompe l'oeil* came into use, and the canvases of a Titian or a Veronese are overflowing with physical sensuality draped in classical myth. The Renaissance likewise supplied us with those twin foundations of our modern science, the analytical spirit of enquiry and the historical and developmental sense. It substituted reason for faith, and thereby its whole attitude to the past was altered. The Middle Ages had quoted the past as authority; the Renaissance regarded it as inspiration. The past became the source of new values rather than the basis upon which the old were founded. This new historical sense formed the basis of our idea of progress, from which in turn arise our conceptions of space and time. The Ptolemaic system, it has been observed, corresponded with the static Paradise, Purgatory, Hell system of religion, while in the Copernican view the infinite in space and time became something incommensurable.

The Renaissance was thus the fountain head of all those streams, other than the purely Christian, which water our own desert. Its new energy is well symbolized by the precipitous tempo of its drama, or by those bursts of flashing limbs and flying draperies from behind the altar of every baroque church. It exploded in every direction at once, in art, in science, in scholarship and archeology, in inventions, in trade, in explora-

tion. Since that time many great men have lived and died, but no other period has produced almost simultaneously a Copernicus to discover the sky, a Columbus to discover the earth, a Shakespeare to write its plays, a Michelangelo to hew its statues, and a Leonardo for its dilettante. This galaxy of genius and talent seems essentially due to the liberation of that other side of individuality, the personality-ideal, so long held in bondage. If the men of this time were able to achieve so much, it was through the flamboyant courage which the new sense of individual significance afforded, to the aristocratic values which made it impossible to think narrowly and meanly, to the great new vistas which were now opened to exploration.

The strong personality-ideal had as its natural complement a return to the Roman view of the State. A system of privilege and hierarchy was implicit in the aristocratic values of the time and was the necessary discipline for a rampant individuality of the kind described. "In the middle ages," says one writer,<sup>1</sup> "the European countries were nothing but vast feudal nebulae." Latin was everywhere the current speech among the educated. "Civil law and canon law were international, feudal law and custom were local." The condition of Europe was that of a petty baronial individualism insecurely held together by the twin organizations of the Church and the Empire. Both these institutions decayed with feudalism, and were supplanted by strong monarchies which, with the support of the middle class, curbed the barons and instituted the centralized government necessary for the protection of commerce. The invention of printing and the rise of vernacular literatures aided this development, while the various disputes, schisms and heresies of the time afforded the King an opportunity to declare himself the arbiter of his people's destiny in religious as well as in secular matters. The old universalist religion became, in fact, partly transformed into the national religions of the separate States and strengthened their growing unity. Nations, like individuals, tended to assume distinctive personalities. The vanity of the Renaissance prince was not content with anything less than complete self-determination for himself and his people and, under his inspiration, the nations learned to conduct themselves with that touchiness concerning honour which was typical of the time. The amorality of modern statecraft and the

<sup>1</sup> Hulme: *The Renaissance, Protestant Revolution and Catholic Revival*.

type of dignity with which the peoples conceive themselves to be collectively endowed are legacies of the Renaissance outlook upon life. They survive here, as Rococo decoration survives on wedding cakes, long after their fashion has disappeared in other spheres.

Our own conception of the individual derives, of course, largely from the Reformation. Partly, the Reformation was a product of the Renaissance, but only partly. Luther's doctrine was the last stone flung at the dogma and hierarchy of the medieval Church, before which the fabric of united Christendom crumbled and the labour of three centuries of scholasticism went into dust. Justification by faith alone and the direct appeal to the Bible were fully in accordance with the Renaissance spirit of free enquiry and its treatment of the past as inspiration rather than as authority. Yet the Reformation was out of sympathy with many aspects of the Renaissance outlook. In the eyes of the Protestant, if individuality did not lie in blind submission to an authoritative Church, neither did it lie in that positive assertion of the personality which was the Renaissance ideal. Rather, its basis was independence, the duty of each to judge for himself and to refuse submission to anything but the word of God acting through the personal conscience. The bulwark of Protestant morality was a sense of guilt and sin entirely alien to the Renaissance outlook, and a rigid insistence upon purity of morals, probity of conduct, justice, integrity, hard work and other virtues quite unsuitable to an aristocracy. This explains the varying attitude of a true Renaissance spirit like Erasmus, his initial sympathy with some of Luther's reforms, his disquiet lest good learning should suffer, and his final distaste for the monk's intolerance. The earnest, heretical spirit of the German Protestant had really nothing in common with the sceptical, often pagan, spirit of the Italian-influenced humanism.<sup>1</sup> In the outcome, the forebodings of Erasmus were to prove justified; the Puritan reaction was to launch its attack upon humanism and to sweep away the cult of beauty and of the aesthetic personality.

Protestantism, it has been said, was far more of a revolution than a reformation. It began, as all revolutions do, with a spate of high-flown libertarian sentiment, followed by the usual splitting of the protagonists into rival sects who hate each other

<sup>1</sup> V. Taylor: *Aspects of the Renaissance*.

more bitterly than they hate the common enemy, and ending in the hard and narrow mentality of the Calvinist. The atmosphere of sixteenth century Europe became loaded with guilt, terror and cruelty. The witch burnings and heresy hunts, the wholesale religious massacres, the sacking of towns, the revival of superstitious beliefs in omens and astrologers, the sensationalism and extravagance which developed in art, all witness to the spirit of anarchy and tyranny which had been let loose. The tolerance, the humanism, the encouragement of learning and of self-expression which had marked the opening of the modern period ended in a time of bitter contraction and frustration. Humanism, in fact, was merely the expression of the expanding phase of the Renaissance just as Liberalism was a similar expression of an expanding industrial age.

By the eighteenth century, the process of contraction had ended in a stabilized order and produced the final version of the despotic state, with its closed frontiers, its mercantilist outlook on economics, its ordered hierarchy of classes, its functional view of the individual. The terrors, cruelties, and superstitions of the previous centuries found their antidote in the Age of Reason. Excesses had been pruned away, the romantic and adventurous spirit had died out, and a formal classicism had been introduced, which corseted the drama in the three unities and limited poetry to the single medium of the heroic couplet. The ideal of the time was Style. The rhetoric, the "badness", and also, unfortunately, something of the genius of the baroque were under the ban of "good taste". The late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries had no doubt achieved a sense of balance, a more perfect synthesis of all the civilized virtues than any time before or since. But this poise was not maintained for long. As the eighteenth century drew to its close, the delicacy gave way to effeminacy and the robustness to coarseness. The decay is most clearly marked in France, for it was there that despotism had entrenched itself most firmly. Signs of it are not wanting as early as the building of Versailles, which Wren condemned for its fussiness and effeminacy, and by the time of Louis XVI the arts and handicrafts had degenerated towards a stiff, thin, precious style which clearly indicated the artificial nature of the society. Every side of life showed the effects of that rigid monarchical absolutism which had turned France's nobility into a crowd of demoralized courtiers, isolating them

from the mass of the people in a way that was destined to split the unity of the organic State asunder.

But while what had now come to be known as the "old order" stiffened and died, a new was inevitably arising. Beneath the crust of political stagnation, a new ferment of expansion, in colonial enterprise, in inventions, in philosophy, was going on, and the middle classes were steadily rising in importance, carrying the Protestant spirit of independence with them. Protestantism, indeed, seems all along to have followed closely the career of the middle classes. While Luther attempted to revive in religion the democratic spirit of the early Church, he still appeared reactionary in politics, putting himself, with his fierce denunciation of the Peasant Revolts, on the side of the German princes to whom the middle classes were looking for support. His example was not followed by the extremer sects, such as the Anabaptists, Presbyterians or Calvinists of Geneva, who were not long in applying the religious principle of independence to political affairs, and Protestantism in general tended to abandon more and more the alliance with political despotism as the time arrived for the middle classes themselves to assume power.

To religious influences making for independence was added the rationalism of eighteenth century philosophers, which set them questioning the sources of secular authority which before had been taken for granted as derived from God. Under the old order, the State had been regarded as an organic whole in which the individual acts as a functional unit. The individual is born into a network of pre-established relationships, and the ruler looks upon his task as the maintenance and development of this general framework as it has been transmitted to him by his forerunners. He is not concerned with the happiness of the greatest number, or with the point of view of the separate individuals in any way. He looks at the State as a whole. "Men come into a community with the social state of their parents, endowed with all the benefits, loaded with all the duties of their situation," says Burke. Their duties are not made by compact, but arise from the natural order of things, in the same way as parents and children are bound to each other in a system of mutual obligations independently of their will and as a simple result of their respective situations. Thus, the status of a man is determined for him by prescription, by tradition, by the man-

ner in which the State into which he is born has grown, thus by Nature, and ultimately by God, as the Author of natural law. The duty of the ruler, as of all others, high or low, is simply to fulfil that function in the order of society to which he has been born. The ruler rules by natural right, as the subject obeys by natural obligation, and any questioning of this pre-established harmony is both a violation of Nature and irreligious. Political power is thus something inherited, along with other privileges, such as exemption from corvées and taxation. The ruler does not appeal to the people or seek to persuade them by reason, but commands them. "In a society where political power is held to depend on birth, property, and privilege, reason and political principles are usually dangerous, unnecessary, and irrational," says Leonard Woolf, in his excellent study of these contrasts between the two régimes,<sup>1</sup> "If power is property . . . political questions turn on theology, paternity and legitimacy."

In order to demolish this view, the philosophers of the eighteenth century had to banish from the argument all questions of growth and tradition, and to strike out from an entirely different premise. This they found in the Reformation view of the individual as a morally complete and self-subsistent entity. They assumed, in an *a priori* manner, an individual originally free and independent, standing quite apart from any functions which he might fulfil or from any social relations into which he might subsequently enter. Society was thus seen as fractionalized into its components, and these components were themselves separated in an abstract manner from the functions which they exercised. If this view of the relationship between the individual and his society were granted, the right to power and privilege had to be proved, legally and logically; it had to be shown that the individual, originally free, had decided of his own volition to enter a social compact for the execution of his functions and had delegated certain powers to his rulers, which, of course, he was also entitled to withdraw again. In this way the philosophers arrived at their thesis of democratic equality, based on a view of the individual which was abstract, a view of society which was atomistic, and a view of the relationship between them which was juristic.

The new conception of the individual produced its typical phase of romantic expansion. It was expressed in music by such

<sup>1</sup> *After the Deluge*, Vol. I, p. 175.

tunes as the *Marseillaise*, and the *Marseillaise* itself is only a popular version of the same sentiments of liberation expressed in the magnificence of some of Beethoven's symphonies. Even a touch of the old Renaissance universalism came to life in Goethe, and a last, late-born example of its political Caesarism appeared in the figure of Napoleon. But although the heroic spirit was fleetingly recaptured in the intoxication of the moment, the new romantic expansion was destined to take a very different course. It was to point neither vertically upward, like the Gothic, nor horizontally outward towards the world, like the Renaissance, but directly inward towards the Self. If, in religion, it was the personal conscience that was emphasized, and, in politics, the question of personal rights, likewise in commerce the doctrine was that of enlightened self-interest, and in art, as we have seen, a romanticism which took for its theme the exploration of the subjective personality.

I need not waste words in describing the enormous liberation of initiative and enterprise from the old feudal trammels which was thus brought about. But for the inward nature of man, it is not always appreciated that the gain in individuality was just as great. Men ceased to be "types" and became unique. Before 1700, says Leonard Woolf, men felt themselves to be representatives of a social class or group or guild, and it is thus that they are always represented in literature. The approach to character, as Leonard Woolf remarks, is quite different in a Renaissance and in a modern play. In the first, the character is primarily a king, priest, courtier or serving man, and his actions are conditioned by his social role. In the second, the characters stand for nothing but themselves. We can see this reflected again in the rise of the novel and the decay of the drama, for the drama is the most succinct medium for exposing the type, while the discursive novel gives scope for the exploration of all the unique peculiarities of the person. In music, also, the change is from a conventional mode, which expresses the manners and etiquettes of the time rather than anything personal, to the individualist work of Beethoven, wherein all the moods, humours, problems and personal opinions of the composer receive their reflection. The new emphasis upon the uniqueness of the individual leads, in fact, to the cultivation of a private attitude to life. Each tends to see his character and temperament as important, not because of its common validity,

but for the opposite reason that it is peculiar to himself. In a society in which this point of view prevails, variation will be extreme, and the tendency in every sphere will be towards dispersion. Poets and artists will break away from the conventional in search of the strange and the exotic. Men like Baudelaire and Rimbaud will emerge, and the subjective, as soon as it comes within the sphere of scientific investigation, will give rise to psychology and psychoanalysis.

“Individualism”—the name by which the last century signified its special idea—is, in popular speech, frequently confused with individuality. According to Woolf, for instance, “individuality” arose simultaneously with the birth of democratic ideas, since “for those who are accustomed to regard everyone as an individual, privilege seems necessarily inequitable and illogical”.<sup>1</sup> I would say, rather, that privilege is illogical only to those accustomed to insist upon the juristic aspect of the question. Individuality, in its full sense, is not bound up with democracy, but, as the principle of social differentiation, must obviously have existed at all times save possibly in that stage of diffused consciousness in which the primitive lives. We have been so obsessed by the particular aspect which happened to be foremost in our epoch that we forget how partial it is, concentrating as it does purely on such “human” values as political rights, commercial self-betterment and psychological uniqueness. It is an ideal adapted to cultivating a certain consciousness of self in Everyman, and as such, it must avoid, as beyond his capacity, all adventurism of the personality and all imaginative moral flights of the soul. It is neither particularly heroic nor at all divine, but remains bounded by the moderation, common sense, and mundane calculation of the middle classes which carried it forward on their banner.

In our own time, “individualism” has become almost a term of abuse. We are apt to forget how greatly it has raised the general average of self-consciousness, secured our political rights, helped on material progress and deepened our subjectivity. We forget these things because the exuberant “new birth” era is over. The great discoveries along these lines have been made, the new opportunities which the ideal offered for personal expansion are exhausted, and we experience only the limitations and the excesses. Inevitably, individualism, like the

<sup>1</sup> *ibid*, p. 248.

personality-ideal before it, receives a check, and we enter a contractive period of terror and confusion such as Europe has perhaps not experienced since the time of the religious wars.

### *The Affective Basis of Individuality*

This historical sketch brings us back to the problems of our own age and to the other aspect of our theme. Individuality, I have said, has not only a cognitive basis in a socially-held idea or ideal, which indicates the lines on which personal differentiation should proceed, but also an affective basis. People are going to be deeply affected in their morale and in their emotional outlook on life by the waxing and waning of their ideals, and these disturbances are going to play a great part in the social changes which ensue. From these considerations, I hope to explain why some historical periods appear to be comparatively calm and ordered while others appear to be marked by every sort of excess.

The affective basis for the development of man's individuality is all that can be summarized as his *sense of worth*. If we ask ourselves what it is that enables a man to think, act and develop himself as an entity independent of others, the answer is—his inward store of mental courage, his belief in himself, his conviction—so sadly lacking in most people at present—that he has a significant part to play in life. Undoubtedly, when we come to consider special instances, we must acknowledge that natural gifts and talents, and the superior originality which goes with these, provide a person with the foundation for a high sense of worth, and psychologists tell us that a favourable environment in childhood is also important for its development. But, whatever its cause or origin, this belief in oneself, once established, largely contributes to its own success. A subjective value like worth is, in many cases, independent of external circumstances. It can defy worldly misfortune as well as deliberate attempts to undermine it by means of social regimentation, imprisonment or deprivation of honour. It is his inexhaustible stock of courage which enables the great artist to weather calumny and to continue his work through long years of neglect. And it is through want of a firm belief in himself that another man may be induced to turn aside, conform to social opinion, or abandon his efforts.

But although worth may be said to subsist of itself, it is nevertheless bestowed on the person by society, and is ultimately dependent upon that society for its sustenance. If it derives, in the first instance, from a favourable environment in childhood, this is as much as to say that it is socially encouraged. If it is based upon the person's natural gifts and talents, this can only be because such gifts and talents are valued and found useful by society. Worth is always and everywhere *social worth*. To replenish one's stock of courage, to maintain or raise one's sense of worth, the confirmation of others is required. The average person, who lacks the enhanced self-confidence of the genius as he lacks his other gifts, usually demands a constant reassurance from society as to the reality of the worth with which he credits himself. He needs his talents recognized, he needs popularity and respect, he needs, in short, to be accorded social significance. Hence he is driven to "prove" his subjective self-estimation in a practical way, by using his talents for the sake of others and by making his whole life and work of social value.

Individuality, therefore, while marking a person out from the herd, does not separate him from it; rather, he is more closely bound to his kind the more unique he becomes. Using Spencer's terms, we may say that individuality is achieved through a process of differentiation and integration. A person in the first place is a unit of his society, bound to it by all the ineluctable ties of language, logic, upbringing, tradition and common interests. He seeks distinction by chafing against these bonds. But the process does not end there. No person can be an individual alone; he needs the presence of other similar beings in order to develop by comparison his own particular uniqueness, and then to have this uniqueness confirmed and recognized. Mere uniqueness has no value in itself. It acquires value only in so far as it has worth conferred on it by others and leads back to the re-integration of the person with his society. Society, we see again, lays down the main lines of development while the individual explores and innovates within them.

It is impossible, therefore, to agree with any philosophy which sets out from the premise that man is "egocentric", or that the interests of individual and society stand in any essential opposition. Society itself evolves by differentiation and integration, by a centrifugal balanced by a centripetal tendency, and

can do without one side of this process as little as it can do without the other. We have seen that a society in which individual variation is not developed must itself remain in an unorganized and primitive state. A society which called for no adaptation would likewise soon return to primitive chaos. The demand for adaptation and social integration is not necessarily in the least hostile to liberty. It provides the necessary restraints which call out variations, encouraging them to become strong and well-defined, while yet preventing them from running to extremes where they would lose their value and meaning. The more perfect a society, the stronger is the stimulation it gives to the variations by which it is enriched, and the more firmly does it seek to exploit, discipline and integrate them into its own life. However great a genius a man may be, he constitutes no exception to these observations; he is only a stronger than usual variation, but he also succeeds or fails in the measure that he can find for his talents a social expression. Hence it is that the most original and remarkable figures in history have generally been the most socially valuable. In spite of their uniqueness, they have been no less typical products of their time, and, were this otherwise, they would have remained for us as accidental and unnecessary as shooting stars. Individuality, in fact, may be regarded as the contribution we make to social life, the unique form of adaptation which we contrive to whatever conditions are imposed to call it out.

One may well ask, if this picture of the relationship between the individual and his society be true, why so many antagonisms between the two seem to exist? These antagonisms seem due, not to any essential opposition of interest, but to the fact that life does not offer us any examples of perfection. Neither is the individual perfectly adapted, nor is society perfectly organized to support all variations. Here we can draw upon the resources of modern psychology, which is mainly concerned with the emotional dynamics of the maladjusted individual, and we can thereafter show that the same events occur in connection with the imperfectly organized society.

Let us begin at the beginning—with the harmoniously-adjusted individual. We may best characterize him as one who values himself rightly and who feels that society values him rightly. This means that he attributes to himself roughly the equivalent in gifts and talents which he is able to "prove" in

practice, so that he has a satisfactory sense of achievement, while he also acquires a satisfactory sense of success from the fact that society recognizes this achievement at what he feels to be its true worth. Hence his self-estimation accords with his powers and with the social estimation in which he is held by others.

Such a person fits easily and contentedly into his social milieu. He is the best type of the average or normal, and, if all were such as he, there would, of course, be no social problem. But he is the rarest of instances, almost a hypothetical specimen. In the vast majority of cases there is a lack of adjustment between these various estimates or values, ranging upward from the norm towards genius and downward to the neurotic. Where the genius or really outstanding man is concerned, we may perhaps blame the society for his maladjustment. He may have a perfectly right idea of his value, and be able to "prove" it to his own satisfaction by his achievements, but it may not be one that society, with its average outlook, is ready to grant. He may not be able to convince society of his value for many years, until his work has matured and been understood, and he may even die with his self-estimation still socially unconfirmed. In the opposite case of the neurotic, we have one whose self-estimation is wrong, who is unable to "prove" it by achievement, and who demands from society an appreciation to which he cannot show himself entitled.

Whenever a serious lack of adjustment between values is found, whether we are inclined to lay the blame upon an unappreciative society or upon the maladjusted individual, the results for the person concerned are the same, and follow Adler's law of psychic over-compensation. As an application of this law to social events is the main foundation of this book, I will stop for a moment to enlarge upon this. Adler's law is itself an application to psychology of the well-known biological fact that an organism suffering from any deficiency will be forced to heighten its striving in order to survive in the struggle for existence, and may as a result not only make good the original deficiency but succeed better than the normally equipped organism. In psychology, the individual who feels himself maladjusted to his milieu, and thus deficient by comparison with others better adjusted, will be forced to heighten his psychic strivings and may overreach the normal in the same

way. Examples are the number of great generals and leaders of men who have been of unusually small stature or of millionaires who have been spurred on by initial poverty. Especially the belief in oneself, which is the very basis of action and striving, must be heightened. The neglected genius, for instance, clings to the belief in his ultimate fame, even to the point of promising himself "immortality", and throws himself into his work with frantic determination, alternating, perhaps, with moods of despair. Martyrdom and persecution have the same effect of fortifying the believer in the justice of his cause, in defiance of whatever the world may think. Perhaps they are in one way easier to bear than long-continued neglect, since they witness at least to the sufferer's negative social significance.

The same compensatory process is at work in the neurotic, who appears to oppose to the world an exaggerated idea of his own superiority. Adler has shown that the starting point here is an unjustifiably low self-estimation which needs this superiority as its counterpoise. The inferiority-feeling in neurotics is so well-attested a fact that I will not stop to enlarge upon it. The dialectics of the matter are that, with his too low opinion of his own capacity, the neurotic lacks the courage necessary for putting to the proof such resources—by no means always inconsiderable—as he has. He therefore acquires no sense of achievement. This failure is compensated by exaggerating his self-estimation, by telling himself, in fact, that he has very superior potential capacities and could achieve great things "if only" circumstances were not against him. He then demands that society accords him recognition on the basis of these imaginary capacities, but society, of course, obstinately refuses to comply. Whereas the genius may lack success, the neurotic lacks the support of both success and achievement. The more rebuffs he receives from society, the more he is driven to value himself highly, and the higher he values himself, the more decisive become the rebuffs, the process continuing in a vicious spiral which threatens to unhinge his whole adaptation to life.

The particular character of the neurotic flows as a consequence from this dialectic. Attempts to realize his superiority, uniqueness or special distinction lead him to emphasize every idiosyncrasy of his personality and to devise all kinds of eccentricities which might serve to impress others. But eccentricity and individuality, while sometimes mistaken for each other, are

really at opposite poles. Individuality is that true and effortless uniqueness which springs from an independence grounded on the sense of worth, while eccentricity is a striving after effect by a person unsure of himself, and it is always stereotyped along certain lines. The neurotic is the least individual as he is the most eccentric of persons. His inferiority and lack of a firm sense of his own worth and his craving for social recognition force him, in spite of his eccentricity, to remain unduly dependent upon the good opinion of others, hence unoriginal, timid, suggestible and of weak will. In him, therefore, the normal means by which individuality is sought are exaggerated by his over-anxious striving in both directions. The urge to differentiation or variation proceeds to the undisciplined extreme of eccentricity, in aggressive defiance of a society that will not recognize his supposed qualities. True social integration is thus made impossible, yet at the same time it is sought in the shape of an undue conformity and dependence upon the good will of others, a clinging to parents, a constant seeking for praise, flattery, love and support, which are all traits excluding any chance of acquiring real originality.

Thus we may say that, whenever the sense of worth has been undermined, individuality also is felt to be impaired, and a heightened compensatory striving ensues which, by exaggerating independence into aggressive eccentricity and integration into timid conformity, only makes the attainment of individuality the more impossible. Since these traits follow with almost mechanical regularity upon every maladjustment between the self-estimation and the social estimation, they are present in greater or lesser degree everywhere outside the norm of the "perfectly adjusted man", and it is easy enough to mistake them for signs of a fundamental opposition between the interests of the individual and those of society.

### *The Theory of Divergent Tendencies*

Religious teachers are right who emphasize that the Kingdom of Heaven is within us, for it is certain that society can never be perfect unless its members are perfect in their adjustments. But those are no less right who tell us that an imperfect society is frequently the cause of imperfection in its members. History records periods of greater good-will and social order,

and other periods of seemingly more pronounced hostility and turbulence—variations which cannot be accounted for in terms of individual failures, but which point to the fact that variations take place in the social structure itself which must be supposed to affect the mentality of those who experience them. Again, there are periods which appear to be stagnant, and others which appear to be full of vitality. Titians, Michelangelos and Shakespeares are not the product of every intellectual climate, but arise together from particular and short-lived combinations of circumstances to which historians have hitherto lacked the key. The advance of society is made by a rather complicated motion. While, on the cognitive side, it shows a fairly steady forward movement due to the race's gradually accumulating experience, there is on the moral or affective side a pronounced cyclic movement which seems to carry us back sometimes almost to the point of departure.

In what way, then, is it possible to describe society as "imperfect"? As I have shown, it is ever in the interests of society to add to its own enrichment and vitality by cultivating individuality, but naturally its ability to do so is limited by its own organization. A society, for instance, organized upon a rural basis would obviously be one which had no room for Michelangelos, for their particular contributions would have no meaning or interest to those about them. Under that form of organization society could absorb only the amount of individual variation necessary to perform the routine work upon which its maintenance depended. It is necessary for society to become more complex before it can make greater demands upon its members, stimulate them to live different kinds of lives and call out new capacities and potentialities. Variations, in fact, cannot precede the mould which must be cast to receive and to canalize them. This does not imply that in lower stages of society individuality is repressed or that any particular discontent is felt. Before individuality has been developed and educated its lack is not apparent, and the peasant who has never been anything but a peasant will not ordinarily desire further means of self-expression than that afforded by his accustomed routine.

What obviously causes discontent or the reverse is the relation between the standard of individuality attained at any period and the social opportunities open for its expression. So long as society continues on the up-grade, social discontent will be at a

minimum. An expanding society is in need of all the variations it can achieve. The moulds are ready, the possibilities stand open, individual worth will be looked upon favourably, and people will gain a feeling of confidence that their achievements will be appreciated. The general stock of courage upon which individual, and therefore social, achievement depends will be continually increased, and the cultural atmosphere will be vivid and stimulating. But such a period is usually of comparatively short duration, for the possibilities of a new social situation are explored rapidly, almost tempestuously. Thereafter, the society will no longer be capable of absorbing or integrating so much variation, at least in the direction in which it has been customarily expressed. In consequence, it will, so to speak, overshoot the mark, its centrifugal and centripetal forces will become unbalanced. Much that was formerly useful variation and honest individuality will be socially unwanted and will run to seed as anarchy and eccentricity, while an unhealthy conformity, preparing the way for tyranny and restriction, will pile up at the centripetal pole. For a person living in such a period the cultural atmosphere would be depressing to initiative, the capacities he had been taught to develop would remain not fully utilized, the value set upon the individual would be low, the general stock of courage would diminish. What holds good for the genius, as the fatality which attends his gift, would now be true for slighter variations or true generally. Society would have to repress what it could not express, discontent and frustration would be felt by all, and compensatory strivings would be accentuated. Each person's self-valuation is now too high in comparison with his social valuation. The prevailing attitude of mind will be akin to that shown by the maladjusted neurotic.

These processes are naturally not so clearly defined as I have drawn them. In every society something is always dying and something being born, old possibilities of expansion are being replaced by new, and there is always some disequilibrium and discontent and many traces of the mentality which accompanies them. However, the reason why, in particular, the decay of every great ideal of individuality is a time of neuroticism and disorder is sufficiently clear. If we look at our own period, we can see that during the expansive nineteenth century phase enormous new possibilities were opened out to the individual in

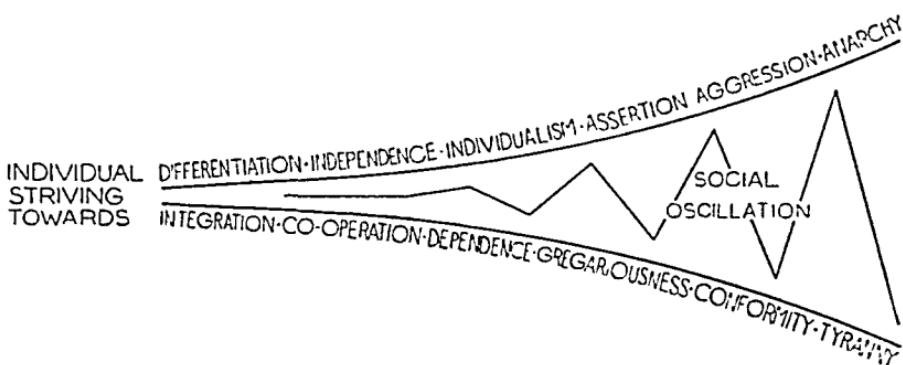
every direction, so that the tone of society was highly optimistic, despite the existence of a good deal of harsh exploitation and social injustice. Thereafter, the powers of production began to come into ever sharper conflict with the limitations imposed by lack of markets and shortage of immediately available raw materials. The competitive striving was increased and society went forward at an accelerated tempo. Nevertheless, the bad tendencies in *laissez faire* industry began to appear, excessive standardization and useless variation developing side by side with a mentality of conforming gregariousness and aggressive individualism, while the tone of the society altered in the direction of morbidity and pessimism.

It looks, therefore, as if, in order to explain our present social psychology, it is not necessary to resort to any pseudo-biological jargon of instincts. It neither explains nor remedies the situation to declare, like some psychologists, that the world is suffering from an outbreak of some hitherto repressed sadomasochistic drives towards war and tyranny. Before we resort to such doubtful hypotheses, let us try to account for such manifestations in terms that are both simpler and more properly social and psychological.

Briefly recapitulated, my argument is that the state of social mentality at any given time depends upon the state of adjustment existing between the social whole and its individual components. The social mentality and the mentality of individuals are subject to the same general law. The normal striving of the individual is for integration and differentiation, which, when attained, manifest themselves in his relation with others as the moral qualities of co-operation and independence, qualities necessary in every member if the group-life is to be at once both harmonious and vigorous. But when, through neurotic faults in the individual or through faults in the social organization, integration and differentiation are not fully attained, there results an over-compensatory striving and a consequent fall in morale. Co-operation and independence then become transformed into their moral opposites. The co-operative aspect of life is exaggerated into a gregarious adaptability, which tends to exclude independence of character; the life of society then undergoes a narrowing, variation being curtailed and symptoms of uniformity and standardization taking its place. Likewise the independent aspect is exaggerated into an aggressive

individualism, which excludes co-operation; the life of society becomes full of eccentricities, and liberty turns to licence. In fact, the two tendencies which are normally complementary and which preserve the harmonious relationship between the individual and his society, tend by excess to diverge until they become incompatible with one another. Viewed on a large scale, excessive individualism, restless discontent, aggressive competition, once they permeate a society, move towards the pole of anarchy. Gregariousness, uniformity, standardization move towards the pole of tyranny. A society in disbalance does not simply rush headlong towards anarchy; its oscillations in every part of its framework between anarchy and tyranny grow more and more violent, the internal contradictions become more acute, until the society either collapses, or, as is more probable, succeeds in righting itself and in finding a fresh adjustment, so that the swing of the pendulum once more dies down towards the normal. In the chapters that follow I shall exemplify the course of these movements in the political events of our time.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Graphically, the divergent psychological tendencies might be represented as below:



## FROM DEMOCRACY TO ESTATISME

*Some Drawbacks to Democracy*

**D**EMOCRACY, like every system of government, is dependent upon the character of the ruler, who in this case is the People. It may abolish the danger of caprice on the part of a single person, but since it gives full rein instead to the expression of human nature in general, it is a no less hazardous form of government than others. Democracy is, after all, only a formal structure, a stage which requires human beings to fill the parts. One may criticize the structure on the ground that it provides insufficient safeguards against the abuse of power, but a form of government has yet to be found so finely balanced that safeguards remain permanently effective without stultifying development. One may lay it down that democracy will succeed in spite of any structural faults so long as the character of those who work it remains at a high level and that, should this character deteriorate, no mere artificial contrivance is likely to be proof against the consequences.

It is not asserted that democracy is neutral as a factor in social change. So far from being neutral, it strongly reinforces whatever tendencies are present in society, the freedom it grants opening out splendid opportunities to a people which knows how to use it rightly and producing disastrous consequences for a people which does not. Psychologically, democracy can heighten the value of the individual or it can appear to reduce him to insignificance. "When the inhabitant of a democratic country compares himself individually with all those about him," says de Tocqueville, "he feels with pride that he is the equal of any one of them; but when he comes to survey the totality of his fellows, and to place himself in contrast to so large a body, he is instantly overwhelmed by the sense of his own insignificance and weakness. The same equality which renders him independent of his fellow-citizens, taken severally, exposes him alone and unprotected to the influence of the greater

number."<sup>1</sup> For this reason, it seems to me that Rousseau was right in judging democracy to be a form of government suitable only to small communities. In social aggregates as huge as those of modern times, the individual will inevitably feel small and lost, his gregarious dependence will increase, as will his compensatory desire to reduce all others to an equality with himself. In spite of the invention of Representative Government, which is claimed to have solved the problem of an extended democracy, I hold that sheer size has much to do with the growth of extremist attitudes of mind and with the consequent decline of the political system.

The argument that a system of Representation makes for passivity and irresponsibility is still valid. The people nowadays is in much the same position as the shareholders of a joint-stock company, who meet periodically to have the balance-sheet read out to them, but who have little power to interfere with the management of the concern. The larger the population which Representative Government succeeds in covering, the less is the power of each person and the smaller the value of his vote. As Hobhouse puts it: "All that the ordinary voter feels about a given act of government is that it is the act of men to whose return to power he contributed one vote out of some million or more it may be three or four years ago, when probably quite other questions were under discussion, and whom he will not be able to dislodge until perhaps two or three more years have passed, by which time again other questions have come up."<sup>2</sup> The system is one that lacks a responsible centre, each voter feeling too inconspicuous to take what is done as his personal affair, while the delegates can always excuse their own negligence, as did the Baldwin Administration on the issue of England's preparedness for war, by pleading that they acted, or failed to act, only in accordance with "the will of the people".

This instance brings to light the great drawback that power is separated from responsibility and that leaders and people judge an issue by different standards. The people judges sentimentally, the rulers by reference to practical expediency. The people may be theoretically averse to war and may refuse to prepare for it; the rulers are not concerned with whether war is good or bad in the abstract, but they see that preparation for it is a

<sup>1</sup> *Democracy in America*, Part II, Bk. III, Ch. 2.

<sup>2</sup> *Democracy and Reaction*, p. 183.

matter of practical necessity. While the people have the power, the rulers alone have the information and experience to judge, and they alone bear the responsibility in the event of any failure. Deception of the people and demagogic become necessary if unpleasant issues are to be faced. The wider the franchise, the further is the average voter from the practical realities of government, and the more will his judgment be sentimental and doctrinaire, so that the need for using demagogic means will increase.

The dangers of demagogic require to be guarded against by an elaborate system of checks and safeguards. Democratic politicians can only be elected for short periods, for instance, to forestall their possible abuse of power, and the system will in consequence lack stability. The leaders are unable to pursue a long-term policy, while the people, being easily swayed by argument or by some subsidiary issue which happens to catch its notice, seldom continues in one direction for long. The conservatism of the system is no less notorious than its instability, and springs from the same root, namely, the incapacity of large masses of people to look far ahead, to envisage long-term policy and to make in time those radical changes which a per spicacious ruler would see to be necessary if disaster were to be avoided. The people distrusts innovators in spite of its fickleness and clings to ways and customs with which it is familiar. Therefore it stumbles unprepared against events, and the course which its affairs take develops more in the manner of a natural process than because it has been willed and planned. Demagogic, instability, and conservatism increase with every extension of the franchise, every growth in complexity of the issues to be solved, every deterioration in the character of the people.

Undoubtedly, the system works best where time has allowed for the growth of a strong national tradition, where the main lines of policy have been settled long previously and the people holds to its direction almost instinctively in spite of all the minor eddies which may ruffle the surface of its politics. But this is as much as to say that democracy lives on its inherited capital. It is seldom creative, and at best, if there are no intervening factors to upset its stability, it is apt to sink, like Switzerland, into a somewhat unimaginative and mediocre course. At the opposite extreme, are countries without a previous tradition, like those of South America, which exhibit violent fluctua-

tions and a never-ending series of revolutions and *coups d'état*.

### *The Degeneration of Party*

However, it is upon the nature of party that the fate of democracy chiefly hangs. The concentration of power in a party is obviously much superior to its delegation to the isolated demagogue, as was the Athenian custom, and there can be no doubt that if the party system is in a healthy condition it can surmount the faults to which democracy is naturally prone. The party, as Bryce points out, is a semi-permanent institution with a more or less coherent political philosophy and platform. It is capable, therefore, of envisaging long-term policy, and it asks the electors to choose between alternatives which are broad and fundamental. Moreover, the same alternatives are placed before the people in all parts of the country, so that the answers have a coherently national character. The danger that electors will be influenced by demagogic personalities rather than by programmes is minimized, since each constituency has before it a different spokesman. Parties educate the people and its leaders in political matters, and their competition and propaganda maintain a sort of pressure upon the voter to show interest and responsibility in public affairs. Members of a party watch each other and check any person's ambition to usurpation and tyranny. The government formed upon party lines will be composed of executives who are all in broad agreement with each other and who can carry out their functions with the assurance that they have a stable Parliamentary majority behind them. The best conditions for this form of government are therefore found when all minor differences can be crystallized into two broad streams of conservative and progressive opinion, whose partisans are of nearly equal strength in the constituencies, but one of whom has for the time a clear working majority. It was, indeed, by living according to this ideal of two alternating parties, each holding moderate opinions vigorously, and both united by a common patriotism, that England was able to set the pattern for the world in her greatest democratic days.

But the party, like the individuals who compose it, will be liable to those changes in tone and moral quality discussed in

the preceding chapter. The party, no less than each of its members, is striving for individuality. In its healthy state, it will strive to differentiate itself from its rivals by contributing new ideas, while its need to achieve a proper integration will ensure that these ideas are of a socially valuable kind. But parties have also been accused of multiplying grievances and exacerbating conflict for their own purposes. Where differences of a genuine sort do not exist, they have to be manufactured, since the difference, like the flag or badge, is a mark which serves to distinguish one from the other. An undue striving for an independent position may also interfere with the parties' co-operation with each other on those occasions when co-operation is desirable. Thus parties have over and over again had to meet the criticism that they place their own interests before those of the nation. They do this less, perhaps, in times of national crisis, when all eyes are focused upon them, than in normal times, when they resort to demagogic expedients for keeping themselves in favour with the public. Nothing is easier, for instance, than for a party which is out of power and lacks a genuine programme to pose as the apostle of universal democracy and return to power on the votes of those whom it has helped to enfranchise. The result for the nation is that with every lowering of the franchise the quality of the electorate is diluted by the inclusion of the more ignorant and irresponsible elements among the population, and the appeal which future leaders can make to such an electorate must similarly be on a lower level. Again, parties are no less prone than ancient demagogues to practise systematic bribery of the people through the misuse of finance. According to Lecky, the extravagance of courts and the forms of nepotism practised under an aristocracy represent an infinitesimal cost to the nation compared to the bribery of the public practised under democracy. "Wars, overgrown armaments, policies that shake credit and plunder large classes, laws that hamper industry, the forms of corruption which bribe constituents and classes by great public expenditure, lavish, partial, unjust taxation—these are the things which really ruin the finances of a nation. To most of these evils unqualified democracies are especially prone."<sup>1</sup>

A party which grows combative and irresponsible after this manner will also show a tendency to internal conformity. In the

<sup>1</sup> Lecky: *Democracy and Liberty*, Vol. I, p. 57.

struggle for its independence it will seek to close its ranks, to insist on loyalty to its cause, even if this means the suppression of new and fruitful ideas. Inevitably a kind of internal hierarchy arises, which is known as the "caucus", and which decides behind closed doors the general line which the party shall adopt and orders how the individual member shall vote. The way to success for the individual member then ceases to be through pleasing the people, but through pleasing the party bosses and convincing them that one is a "safe man". The quality of the membership therefore sinks, and the ranks of party supporters become filled with mediocrities and ambitious wire-pullers who are willing to subordinate themselves entirely to the views of their colleagues. In this way, behind the gathering din of battle, the parties are tending to a certain conservatism. Maine calls our attention to the fact that as time goes on the original parties in a democracy become more homogeneous and fundamentally alike. The conditions which in the beginning gave rise to real differences pass away, while the opposing slogans remain as distinctive labels. New ideas are stifled; the parties cease to reflect current events, but become institutions retained in the interests of their supporters, who find in them a convenient ladder by which to climb into power. Having amassed large funds, and having built up a country-wide organization, they are able to drive competitors out of business and take on the character of other monopolies, until it becomes almost impossible for the independent person to gain a footing in politics.

The development of these tendencies, at once combative and conservative, may be a very slow, insidious process, but it nevertheless heralds the decline of the whole system. As new issues force themselves into notice, people begin to grow more aware that their votes make no substantial alteration to the nature of things and that the evils and anomalies which they see everywhere around them continue exactly as if they had not voted at all. Parliament begins to fall into disrepute owing to the academic nature of its debates. "Parliamentarism", the "Parliamentary talking-shop", and other such phrases are coined to express the people's contempt for the inaction and ineffectiveness of their political organs. This provides the basis for the rise of new minority parties and ushers in the final phase of extremism. The new parties have not at their disposal the funds and organization of those already well-established, but they

have other assets, such as the relative modernity of the issues they represent and the fact that their very smallness gives those who vote for them the feeling that these votes count for much. With the support of these votes the new parties promise to perform something distinctively new, and their usual suggestion is to overthrow the entire system and to introduce some miraculous Utopia of their own.

The new parties represent a great leap forward of the tendency to aggressive demagogry. Whereas the conduct of the older parties is always tempered by their need to maintain the *status quo*, from which they all benefit, whatever their surface differences, the interest of the new parties lies in breaking up the existing monopoly of power in order to create a foothold for themselves. They can afford to pursue a far more radical and reckless policy, and can even watch with pleasure the disintegrating effects on the whole body politic of the vicious type of demagogry which they have introduced. It is from this point that one can mark the gulf between the conservative and progressive elements in the nation widening until they are transformed into elements that are reactionary and revolutionary. The older parties draw ever closer together in common self-defence, constitute themselves the pillars of democracy, and condemn their opponents for splitting the nation in their own interests. The charge is certainly justified, for the usual method of the new parties is to concentrate upon some sectional interest, provided that it is numerically large enough to bring them one day the hope of attaining power. It was, I think, Maine who pointed out that, whereas Whigs and Tories drew their supporters from all classes, Socialists managed to divide the nation socially instead of politically. They made their appeal to one specific section of the nation as against the other and further developed their anti-national bias by seeking affiliation with kindred movements in other countries.

It is true that as the original Socialists became powerful they discovered their interest in the *status quo* and became conservative in their turn. Nevertheless, they set the tone for those who were to come after them, and who were to labour the grievances of class with an ever greater use of demagogry. The more modern parties, formed on racial lines, pursue exactly the same policy, and their claims are particularly hard to resist because they are based ostensibly on the democratic tenet of

self-determination. By making use of democratic liberties and slogans for anti-democratic purposes they place the true upholders of democracy in a quandary. These latter must either passively submit to seeing the nation split and the basis of the system overthrown, or they must depart from their own principles of free speech and resort to suppressive measures—thus turning sympathy towards the “persecuted” and presenting them with a handsome justification for their own aggression. The problem of minorities thus grows in time into one of the acutest dangers threatening democracy.

The tendency towards internal conformity shows an equally great leap forward in the newer, fundamentally anti-democratic parties. Extremist parties, like the Communists, contain, it is true, a proportion of genuine idealists, but they appeal also to the most frustrated and spiritually impoverished elements among the population. It is not, be it remembered, only the decay of the party system, but also the deterioration of morale among the whole electorate, which forwards the tendency towards extremism. In the psychology of the great masses the antithesis between aggression and subservience is becoming more acute, and those who enter the extremist parties are seeking to express and to satisfy both sides of this antithesis. While their aggressive tendencies receive herd-support and confirmation, their subservient tendencies find equal satisfaction in accepting the stringent conformity which the “party line” demands and in submission to the “leader”. The attraction of the extremist party is that it raises the sense of significance of that motiveless cypher who is modern man; its dogmas serve him for orientation, and the more sacrifices—even unto death—which the cause requires of him, the greater will be his sense of purpose and importance, and his chance of acquiring a martyr’s halo.

The “cause” for which extremists of all kinds sacrifice themselves grows to be held less from intellectual conviction than from feeling. The reasons used to justify the cause, provided that they are sufficiently specious, count for less in gaining adherents than the emotional violence with which they are put forward. One may observe how the members of such a party are as fickle as they are dogmatic, and are liable to turn violently against their allegiance, especially if they are disappointed in their hopes of a quick success for their aims. Rifts and secessions

are much more numerous here than in the old-established parties. The members of any extreme group will normally transfer their loyalty to the rival which seems to stand most diametrically in opposition to the cause which they have hitherto been supporting, since the psychology of extremism is the same in both. Communists interchange easily with Fascists, revolutionaries make the strictest bureaucrats, just as, formerly, rakes turned overnight into ascetics.

The degeneration of party—indeed of all human groups—will always take place along these general lines. The connection between individual psychology and group psychology, about which there has been a good deal of abstruse theorising, is really exceedingly simple, provided that the relationship between the personal unit and the social whole is once understood. Normally, each man belongs to numerous groups, owing allegiance in the first place to his family, then, perhaps, to his social set, to a guild, a club, a philanthropic society, a church, a political party. He is attracted into these in search of that individual significance of which the huge, amorphous society would otherwise threaten to deprive him. The larger and more unwieldly the society, the greater the number of subsidiary groups of which it is compacted. Men are thus bound into their community by many strands of relatedness, and a system of local ties is constituted, whose value in supporting the main body and in enriching it with variations every writer on sociology has been at pains to stress.

The aim of every group and party must normally be socially directed. Its existence can only be justified and adherents gained by professing to stand for the good of the whole. This is true even of those revolutionary groups, such as the early Christians or modern anarchists, which seem by their doctrines to set themselves in opposition to the rest of society. We simply see here that, where the goal of differentiation is very pronounced, the idealism of working for the good of all mankind is equally accentuated. When such groups are genuine, they are likely to have the most important contributions of all to make.

But parties and groups will also have the mentality of their component members. Where these members have an over-compensated striving for significance, the parties will likewise become neurotically-minded. In this unhealthy state the effect of parties on the main body will be in the opposite direction and,

instead of acting as local ties, they will become disintegrating agents. Their striving grows to be so aggressive that co-operation is excluded, the welfare of the whole suffering, indirectly at first through demagogic irresponsibility, later more frankly through the purely selfish attempt to advance sectional interests. Simultaneously, the quality of the membership deteriorates through the uniformity imposed, first by the caucus, later by the leader. The greater the uniformity imposed on the members by the group, the greater will be these members' compensating aggressiveness, while the aggressiveness, by inspiring opposition, will need the backing of a greater loyalty and uniformity. The two traits reinforce each other in a vicious circle and end by filling all society with the spirit of conflict. Anarchy tends to arise if the conflict remains long unresolved, tyranny if any one group should wholly triumph. One may lay it down that the greater the feeling of insignificance among individuals, the more fanatical will be the compensatory strivings of groups, the sharper the accentuation of divergent tendencies and the swifter the disintegration of society.

### *The Corruption of the Electorate*

By successive enfranchisements the democracy attains at length to its unqualified form where every adult member is also a voter, so that, as pointed out, the average person, being farther removed from the centre of affairs, becomes more dogmatic and less responsible in his judgments, and the numerical influence of the lowest strata among the population becomes preponderant. In a large modern State, the issues which have to be faced grow to be increasingly complex as the political capacity of the electorate diminishes. The rising minorities, whose appeal is chiefly to the newly enfranchised—to the politically inexperienced youth on the one hand and to the illiterate and disinherited classes on the other—complicate the situation by filling the people with passion concerning measures of whose scope and significance it is in ignorance. One result is the growth of bureaucracy, with its inertia, its lack of sympathy with human problems, its fear of the populace and its desire to conceal all controversial issues. Bureaucracy is as devoted as the people to the principle of equality, which facilitates administra-

tion, so that its influence is directed to increasing the gap between the rulers and the ruled.

The gap between rulers and ruled is furthered by the decay of another of democracy's foundations, the institution of local self-government. For local government flourishes best where there exists a true diversity of elements among the population. In Switzerland, for example, four languages are spoken, there are two main religions, and a great diversity of race, occupation, geographical features and historical tradition among the cantons. Such variation within the national body, so far from leading to any kind of anarchy, bears fruit as independence and local patriotism. In the larger industrial democracies, however, localities tend to lose their distinctive features, towns become much like each other, local industries die out, communications increase the mobility of the citizens. Every man's business depends now, not upon local conditions, but upon national affairs, and all eyes are fixed upon the offices of the central government, whence emanate the decisions concerning trade and tariffs, war and peace. Many public services also tend to pass beyond the competence of local authorities. Roads must form an integrated network, free from tolls and local variations, public assistance, which bears most heavily upon the already poorest parishes and municipalities, must be met from the central funds, education must be made to follow national policy, and conditions generally must be equalized and standardized throughout the country. The people lose that interest in local affairs which is the best education for citizenship, and the civic pride which furnishes the basis for larger loyalties.

The realization of the dangers inherent in the people's political incapacity is one of the driving forces behind the extension of education. I think it is true that without universal education democracy would not have survived to the extent that it has done. By its aid much quicker public reaction to current events has been made possible, in harmony with the increased speed with which decisions have to be taken in the modern world. Democracy would otherwise have proved very cumbersome and inefficient, and the tendency to carry on government over the heads of the people would have made its appearance sooner. But education, in the form in which it has hitherto been given, while it increases peoples' general bright-

ness and adaptability, making them more mobile both as workers and as citizens, is also apt to destroy native shrewdness and common sense and to fill the mind with words and half-digested theories. "Its manifest tendency is to diffuse popular common-places," said Maine, "to fasten them on the mind at the time when it is most easily impressed, and thus to stereotype average opinion."<sup>1</sup> It does not deepen individuality, but varnishes the character of each person with the same cheap and glossy coat of individualism, which, however excellent as a refracting medium for secondhand ideas, is impermeable in so far as real and personal experience is concerned. It causes its recipients to substitute trust in generalizations and abstractions for trust in their own feelings and convictions. It increases uniformity, social suggestibility, and superficiality at the same time as, by heightening people's self-consciousness, and by opening to their view new horizons, it induces discontent with their present lot. It has enabled them to formulate their discontent, previously inarticulate, converting their feelings and emotions into fixed ideas and dogmas. Thus crystallized, passions no longer disappear with the cause which gave rise to them, but form permanent strata in the mind which can be recalled and utilized at will. In such circumstances, the training of the rational faculties, which was designed to moderate the passions and to make rule by persuasion possible, has the opposite effect of causing ideologies to thrive.

Education provides the basis for the enormous role which newspapers play in our public life. Again it may be said that without the rapport between electors and leaders which newspapers maintain democracy on the present huge scale would be an impossibility. However, newspapers, like other commercial enterprises, tend to form monopolies. Controlled in the form of "chains", they receive their news and views from one centre, stereotyping opinion and drowning minority voices in the roaring demagogic flood. Dependent on a large turnover, their endeavour must be to please and flatter the public, to say to-day what it will be thinking to-morrow. Unfortunately, they do not merely swing with the tide of public opinion, but are an active force in making and exaggerating it. Exaggerating first in one direction, then in another, they increase the fickleness and instability of the people's mentality. They exacerbate all the

<sup>1</sup> Sir Henry Maine: *Popular Government*, p. 36.

various forms of frustration and furnish them with just those arguments which give them ideological force. It is necessary for their success that they provide the reader every day with a new dramatic and sensational event wherewith to spice his routine, so that, if nothing of importance has happened, it has to be created. By training people to expect drama, they naturally set the pace for the leaders who must act the drama, and this is perhaps one of the most important ways in which they contribute to the general pandemonium.

Much has been talked of the venality of the newspapers, and it is true that in certain countries bribery, either by commercial interests or by a foreign power, has had serious consequences. Where this bribery does not exist, it has been affirmed that newspapers will nevertheless have their policy dictated by the advertisers upon whom they are financially dependent. Thus a doctor, who writes a weekly syndicated article on health for a big newspaper combine, may be "tipped off" to say nothing in disparagement of white bread, since millers who advertise in these papers find it more profitable to push upon the public the white bread from which they have extracted valuable by-products for separate sale rather than the wholemeal variety with its natural goodness left intact. Probably more damage is done in this negative way, by withholding certain facts necessary for forming a proper judgment, than by direct propaganda. Indeed, the chief art of journalism seems to lie in knowing what it is wisest to leave unsaid, and how to skirt the unofficial censorship imposed by the multitude of prejudices of readers, advertisers and owners. Anyone who has had anything to do with the popular press knows the vast quantity of "inside information" which never gets into print and the gulf which separates the opinions privately held by the journalist from those which emanate from his pen.

It is, in fact, not at all necessary, from the newspapers' point of view, that the reader's judgment should be correct, or even that it should be clear; it is preferable that it should remain both biased and confused, for this is the state of mind in which he can be most easily influenced. As the power of the Press increases, its respect for the reader diminishes, newspapers nowadays often appearing as if they were addressed only ostensibly to the public and in reality to particular rivals behind the scenes. Items are included, not so much to inform the public as

in order to bring pressure upon "certain persons" or for "foreign consumption". The reader is moved to indignation or stirred to pity over events which might have appeared quite differently qualified and have produced quite other emotions had they come within the scope of his personal experience. While the existence of rival interests ensures that the public will hear at least a certain amount of what passes, it is obvious that this disrespect for the reader lays the moral groundwork for the organized misrepresentation practised by a State-controlled Press.

Moreover, as rival interests begin to align themselves, especially in the sphere of foreign affairs, behind the State, the newspapers begin to assume the important function of distracting the reader's attention from certain affairs in which it would be his democratic duty to be interested. If a decision has to be taken in which his interference would be unwelcome, the matter can be "played down"; headlines can be devoted instead to some new scientific invention which titillates his love of magic, or, beginning with a selection of letters in the correspondence columns followed by editorial comment, a "campaign" can be launched for some quite extraneous object of social welfare. Indeed, it is possible to foresee a time when to distract attention from politics on to social welfare will be the whole function of the Press, when newspapers will become the channel for that "organized clamouring" which in the latter days of the Roman Empire was the only form of political expression allowed to the populace. While the rulers take the decisions of peace or war, the newspapers will be pursuing the theme that every citizen should be entitled, say, to a free blanket, or that every mother should possess a State maternity gown.

But it is perhaps on moral tone that newspapers have their worst effects. By fostering the public's already unhealthy excitability, they impair the moral as well as, by their misrepresentations, the intellectual basis for objectivity. They increase insecurity to the point of stampede, mobilize hatreds, and for the sake of drama focus attention upon the caricatured personalities of the leaders, the heroes and monsters of public imagination, rather than upon events. Psychological mobility is vastly increased, and the public is drawn hither and thither in great, billowy waves of emotion. The tone of the newspapers is never

friendly, human, tolerant, but affords the reader a training in all the stock neurotic attitudes. Its snarling propaganda, imbibed night and morning, sets the pattern for his manner of looking at life and teaches him to react to public events with the full force of his projected personal antagonisms.

To the clamour of newspapers is now added that of the Radio, which is a technical device of immense importance in increasing the people's psychological mobility. Being in most countries at the service of the State, the people are welded together in direct dependence on the government which doles out news and organizes its entertainment, frightens it with special announcements and plays light music to keep it calm. The leaders are able to reach the public without being obliged to depend upon the monopolistically-controlled Press to report their speeches, and the Press, losing power, is forced into line with national policy. Radio and the microphone tend to replace the influence of the writer by that of the orator, and everyone knows the part which these instruments have played in the rise of dictators.

### *Growth of Majority Tyranny*

The march of democracy may be divided into two phases, as I have already divided other social developments. While in the first phase the emphasis is mainly upon liberty, in the second it is upon equality, and the one ideal comes at length to be sacrificed to the other. The first phase is characterized by independence of judgment, by impatience with authority, by insistence on the sacred nature of private rights. These characteristics degenerate at length into licence requiring the check of a powerful authority. One can see with what ease every encroachment upon liberty can be justified if we take a particular case, say, town planning, as an example. It is obvious that the excessive individualism of the first period led to the creation of hideous and disorderly urban areas which, for the health and comfort of the population, must be brought under some kind of control. Town planning is impossible where each house is separately owned and where a few owners, by refusing to part with their property or by holding out for prohibitive prices, may prevent indefinitely any schemes for social improvement. But if legislation is used in this instance to cut clearances in the forest of private rights, the precedent is set for similar action in

other and perhaps less justifiable instances, until the will of the majority becomes the sole law before which everything must give way. The majority becomes more and more impatient of any forms and ceremonies which resist its desires, talks about "breaking through red tape", and comes at length to nurse plans for confiscation without compensation. Politicians have to be everlastingly making speeches promising that private interests which conflict with the public good will be "ruthlessly dealt with".

By its insistence on equality and the will of the majority, the people prepares its own enslavement. The people is transformed into an indistinguishable mass, with something of the character of a natural force, whose blind and often dangerous action must be canalized and manipulated by the leaders. Since all men are conceived as equal, nobody is deemed to speak with more authority than another, so that private opinion remains unheard while the viewpoint of the majority acquires immense ascendancy as the only force standing superior to the equal individuals who compose it. A mentality of intolerance towards the individual is therefore the natural accompaniment of the trampling upon his private rights. Anyone who stands aloof, anyone who cannot show that he is working for the good of the majority—euphemistically called "the good of humanity"—is condemned. Thereafter, intolerance is again extended, and the majority sets itself to trample upon the rights of racial, religious and political minorities and upon the liberties of subject peoples.

A government divorced from its electoral base will naturally harbour "sinister interests", interests not only of party, but financial and City interests as well, so that its decisions begin to reflect discussions in the lobbies, at board meetings, at week-end gatherings, or in the banker's little sanctum. Firms, as we have seen, when they grow to the size of monopolies, eliminate some of the worst effects of competition in the industries over which they hold sway. They limit production, standardize inessentials, maintain price equilibriums, introduce order into working conditions. But these elements of order are achieved only by the projection of the hitherto existing anarchy into the social arena. Competition, eliminated on the small scale, is transferred to the large scale, where it takes on a much more political character. Monopolies become fiercely anarchic in relation to each other

and to the State. They contend behind the Parliamentary stage for those fiscal and other policies likely to benefit them, and attempt to engage the nation in foreign adventures for the acquisition of the markets and raw materials in which they are interested. The role of the armament manufacturers, which has been sufficiently exposed, is a case in point. Monopolies often make agreements with similar monopolies in other countries, and seek to demarcate each other's spheres of influence, behaving in this manner like those political groups whose policy is governed by their international affiliations. The danger is that these political and industrial groups tend to become a state within a State, often having a separate foreign policy to that of their home government, and behaving, in the words of Hobbes, "like wormes within the entrayles of the naturall man".

The task of establishing the State's authority over these forces of disruption is not altogether an easy one, since these forces have the power which derives from their close association with governing circles. Aid comes, however, from the danger of war which their activities create. Aid comes also from the side of the people, which is clamouring for the State to protect it against its exploiters. Slowly, therefore, the government is forced to take control, pushing its nominees on to the boards of directors, promulgating anti-Trust laws, turning certain monopolies into public or semi-public corporations. Grumbling, perhaps, about the value of enterprise, the private interests nevertheless succumb more or less voluntarily to the necessities of the situation. They close their ranks about the State, consolidating themselves into an ordered hierarchy; they lose their independence, but not always their position. With the later introduction of a managed currency and of government allocation of raw materials, their subservience becomes complete.

The State has now triumphed, first, over the majority, then, with the aid of the majority's aggressive and gregarious spirit, over every private interest, and an absolute conformity reigns. Tocqueville has drawn a picture of the character of this State towards its own citizens which I shall quote in full, since, even after the lapse of a hundred years, it can hardly be improved upon. He foresaw that there would come a time when, above the multitude of men all equal and alike, all regular and industrious in their habits, restrained even in their vices, and

"incessantly endeavouring to procure the petty and paltry pleasures with which they glut their lives", would rise "an immense and tutelary power, which takes upon itself alone to secure their gratifications, and to watch over their fate. That power is absolute, minute, regular, provident and mild. It would be like the authority of a parent if, like that authority, its object was to prepare men for manhood; but it seems on the contrary to keep them in perpetual childhood; it is content that the people should rejoice, provided they think of nothing but rejoicing. For their happiness such a government willingly labours, but it chooses to be the sole agent and only arbiter of that happiness; it provides for their security, foresees and supplies their necessities, facilitates their pleasures, manages their principal concerns, directs their industry, regulates the descent of property and subdivides their inheritances—what remains, but to spare them all the care of thinking and the trouble of living? Thus it every day renders the exercise of the free agency of man less useful and less frequent; it circumscribes the will within a narrower range, and gradually robs a man of all the uses of himself. The principle of equality has prepared men for these things; it has predisposed men to endure them, and oftentimes to look on them as benefits. After having successively taken each member of the community in its powerful grasp and fashioned him at will, the supreme power then extends its arm over the whole community. It covers the surface of society with a network of small, complicated rules, minute and uniform, through which the most original minds and the most energetic characters cannot penetrate, to rise above the crowd. The will of man is not shattered, but softened, bent and guided; men are seldom forced to act, but they are constantly restrained from acting; such a power does not destroy, but it prevents existence; it does not tyrannize, but it compresses, enervates, extinguishes and stupefies a people, till each nation is reduced to nothing better than a flock of timid and industrious animals, of which the government is the shepherd. I have always thought that servitude of the regular quiet and gentle kind which I have just described, might be combined more easily than is commonly supposed with some of the outward forms of freedom; and that it might even establish itself under the wing of the sovereignty of the people."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Democracy in America*, Part II, Bk. IV, Ch. vii (1840).

*Growth of World-Anarchy*

Democracy is breaking up also on the world scale. The democratic world-order was the product of the great movements of emancipation which took place during the last century, and whose aim was the self-determination of every group which could lay claim to the title of a nation. A nation, it was argued, is above all a spiritual unity between those possessed of a common stock of memories and a common cultural heritage. Those who read Shakespeare as their poet, who regard Marlborough as the general on their side, are a nation irrespective of whether they are of Celtic, Saxon or Norman ancestry, speak the same language or live within certain defined geographical limits. Ireland is thus a part of the English nation in so far as she shares England's culture and tradition, but she is a separate nation in so far as she succeeds in reviving a set of memories and national heroes exclusive to herself. The movements of emancipation sought to free every group of this sort from the yoke of alien rule, so that it should be capable of realizing its potential individuality. The spiritual unity of the nation had to be completed by the political unity of the State, and the sovereign independence and equality of all such Nation-States was considered the truest expression of democracy in the world at large.

It is scarcely necessary to point out that Europe is now entering a phase which makes an anachronism of this ideal. Communications are fast rendering the whole Western world part of one international culture, standardizing countries in relation to each other as surely as they have standardized each internally. Similarities and common interests are now more important than local differences and require a larger unity than the Nation-State to give them expression. Equality is being undermined, the larger States, like the larger monopolies, growing steadily more powerful, until only two or three enormous blocs are left while the rest dwindle to a uniform insignificance. Self-determination is not a reality when nations are so interlocked that none is free to pursue a separate course of development. The League of Nations was the last effort to maintain the democratic world-order, and it failed, fundamentally, because in all the really practical matters the larger States could not

afford to admit the theory of the equality of their lesser neighbours.

Unfortunately, the threat to national individuality contained in the new conditions accentuates patriotic striving. Instead of going forward towards the relinquishment of sovereignty, the nations cling more closely to their loyalties and devolve towards autarchy. It is in vain that finance and industry, as well as many cultural movements, attempt to overleap the restricted frontiers. They succeed, as we have seen, only in fostering suspicion in the countries into which they penetrate and in presenting an anti-patriotic appearance in the countries whence they originate. No person, and no body of people, such as a nation, can afford nowadays to relinquish the least part of their threatened psychological significance. The mentality described as belonging to the modern State precludes the possibility of voluntary international co-operation.

Patriotism has generally been regarded as a noble emotion, even as the highest virtue to which a man can aspire. Its influence for good upon the individual and upon the group is normally incontestable. The progress of groups through emulation with other groups, the diversity of their achievements and the unity of their traditions, are all the products of the patriotic emotion. Moreover, respect for the enemy or rival has always been, since chivalric times, an essential ingredient in the finest patriotism, for the very understandable reason that the nobility and worth of the enemy is a necessary means of increasing the same qualities in those who oppose him, while it is psychologically of no advantage to cross swords with one who is base. Groups need emulation to maintain their solidarity and to develop their virtues. In simpler societies, enemies are often merely hereditary. A vigorous group may even go out of its way to seek enemies—not because of any “aggressive instinct” in the human being, but rather as the hero seeks out the dragon as a test for his strength.

But, like the loyalties and snobberies of lesser groups, patriotism is not always a virtue. Patriotism, for instance, was at a low ebb in the eighteenth century, before its idealism was revived by the movements of emancipation. To a man like Dr. Johnson it appeared as “the last refuge of a scoundrel”. Whether or not patriotism is a virtue depends upon the quality of the feeling on

which it is based, and modern patriotism, like party loyalty, acts as a disintegrating solvent upon the world-order. To-day, if States are, as Tocqueville described, the beneficent shepherds of their flocks, they are also ravening wolves where other flocks and where all who oppose the interests of their majorities are concerned. They incarnate not only the docility but also the criminal instincts of those who compose them. Because religion has lost its influence, the temporal power of to-day has no spiritual counterbalance, while, under democracy, the egoism of the majority can run to any extreme and no man feels himself responsible. Once the State becomes absolute it constitutes one vast extremist group, with its mentality of conformity and aggression.

The patriotism of any thoughtful person is therefore bound to be rendered ambiguous by the conflict between the group's traditional claim on his loyalty and the arguments in favour of Good Europeanism. His feelings as well as his common sense will be in revolt, for he will find it difficult to associate himself with the majority's crude egotism and to fulfil all that it demands without doing violence to his own moral nature. "There ought", said Burke, "to be a system of manners in every nation which a well-formed mind would be disposed to relish. To make us love our country, our country ought to be lovely." When the group to which a man belongs fails to raise his worth, then it is not in reason to expect him to give it his allegiance. On the contrary, he is likely to react against it, since, in expecting him to share its extremism, it is forcing him to degrade himself to its level. In our time, therefore, we see the world full of a multitude of people who are in greater or lesser degree anti-patriotic. The disgust and disappointment of the more extreme among them is one of the causes for the rise of those internationalist and secessionist minorities whose disloyalty to their country plays into the hands of dictators seeking the internal disintegration of their enemies.

We are accustomed to talk as if *laissez-faire* competition were dying. On the contrary, competition, beginning between individuals, and extending thence to firms, monopolies and nations, is continuing its grand march in the direction of world alliances, projecting anarchy before it and leaving a greater measure of conformity in its wake. Once competition is eliminated within the State, the State itself becomes the sole com-

petitor in relation to its neighbours, and this fusion of politics and economics immeasurably increases international tension. As the world-order of democracy crumbles beneath this tension, we see a repetition of the same process noted internally. The nations divide into reactionaries and revolutionaries, producing the ideological alignments which lead to war.

Wars, when they occur, do not, of course, alter existing tendencies, but only accentuate them. War provides a real enemy upon whom the pent-up aggression can be focused, and replaces, by the clearly defined goal of beating this enemy, the feelings of purposelessness and disorientation which were the accompaniments of most people's lives. The value of every individual to the community is immediately raised, and, especially, neurotic and semi-neurotic persons and all the humiliated, unemployed and degraded find themselves wanted for the first time, with admirable effects upon their psychology. War, therefore, is always fundamentally popular, and allows the tendency to regimentation and centralization to be carried further. The set of narrow conditions under which most people live, the daily grind at the office or factory, the friction of home and family, is broken up and the individual released into a freer, larger existence, with the promise of new experiences, new adventures, new illicit sexual enjoyments. The shifting of population to new workplaces, the evacuation of war-areas, the mingling of everyone in the Forces, all help to disintegrate local ties, to dissolve tradition and custom and to break down social stratifications. There emerges the mobile, restless, uniform type of man who is the fit subject for the centralized despotism.

The same tendencies to regimentation and uniformity are accentuated by war in regard to nations. In a period of contracting markets and over-production the prime question becomes, "Who shall retain the right to produce and whose capital equipment shall be destroyed to make more room?" The victors attempt to secure a monopoly of the world's markets and to concentrate production for these markets within their own borders. While there is an extension of the range of industrial civilization into hitherto backward areas, producing a levelling-up of colonial territories to the Western standard of living, there is a levelling down of the vanquished towards the agricultural and colonial status. The whole world tends to

become more uniform and more helplessly dependent upon the master nations.

War, it is often said, sees to the survival of the fittest. It is the fittest, however, not in any absolute sense, but only in the sense of the best adapted to survive in the environment of the moment. Just as it is not the highest social type among individuals which is best adapted to modern conditions, so we need not expect the survival of the most cultured or enlightened nations. Those will obviously come best out of a war which are best equipped, economically, politically and ideologically to incarnate the standardized life of the time.

### *Summary*

Let me briefly recapitulate the course of democracy's decline outlined in this chapter. The argument has been that while democracy, as a system of government, flourishes under the rule of a co-operative and independent People, it decays easily and quickly should the character of the People tend to conformity and aggression. The agents of this decay are the Parties, as soon as they divide into reactionary and revolutionary camps and grow internally more orthodox as they become externally more extremist. They then lose their character of valuable local ties, undermine democracy's foundation of unifying patriotism, and their conflict carries the system towards anarchy. The rise of fiercely competing monopolies parallels their work in the economic sphere. However, as life loses its local variety and the populace is standardized at a dead level, we see the growth of the omnipotent State, which, by using the power of the majority to trample down private rights and independent opinions, introduces a certain order. The State incarnates both aspects of the People's mentality, using its egalitarian strivings to impose internal conformity, canalizing its aggressive strivings against foreign competitors, so that the world-order of democracy founders in anarchy and war. Nations, like Parties, divide ideologically into reactionaries and revolutionaries. Finally, we see in our own day the beginnings of a wider uniformity, namely the suppression or regimentation of the smaller Nations under the domination of one or two World-Powers. The divergent tendencies described at the end of the last chapter intensify their nature as they extend their

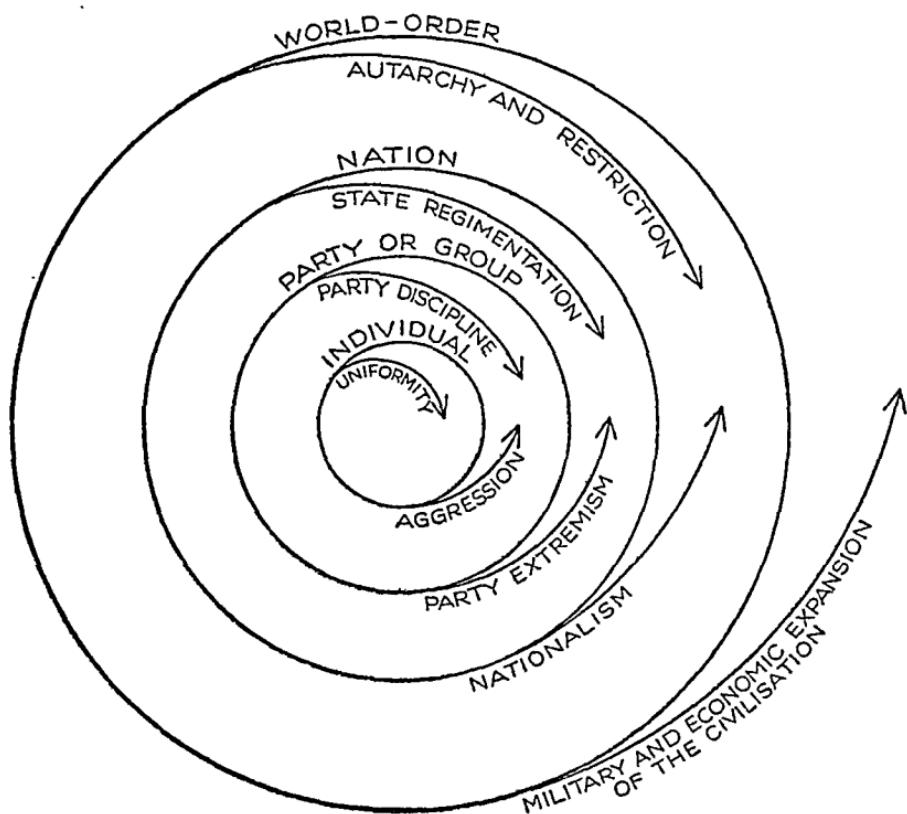
scope, until the whole fabric of international life rocks between anarchy and tyranny.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> No adequate visual picture can give the impression I wish to convey of the social whole. The best I can do is that below.

We see four circles. The inner represents the Individual. Enclosing it is a second, representing the Group or Party in which he is bound up. Enclosing that is one representing the Nation, and beyond that again one representing the Comity of Nations.

In each is a centripetal tendency meeting the centrifugal tendency coming from the other. These tendencies come into conflict on every plane. The more complete becomes the inward restriction of the civilization, the more violent becomes its outward expansionism.

The pressure of all these forces brings nearer the dissolution of the individual into a cypher, the dissolution of his group into a crowd, the dissolution of his nation into a mass.



## REVOLUTION AND CROWD-PSYCHOLOGY

WE HAVE seen how, once frustrated, the individual, with an unconscious but no less inflexible purpose, begins to pull to pieces the whole fabric of the society which is frustrating him. He withdraws his belief from all its traditions and refuses to comply with its morals and etiquettes. Every institution, like the family, every organization, group and local tie reverses its normal function and becomes a disintegrating agent. The result is that society gives still less support to the personal life and the individual has all the more reason for wishing its destruction. But life without society is inconceivable, and as much as the individual desires its destruction he makes for the security of the herd, hoping to find a fresh orientation and the recreation of all that has perished. Wherever elements of the tradition still persist, they are never so eagerly sought after as in a period of revolution. Revolution performs for the individual this double function of razing the society which has been the source of his frustration and of re-establishing it upon the basis of his unchanging needs. It is these great, if fumbling, attempts by the peoples to build up their society and to return to their tradition which will be the theme of the present chapter.

*International Socialism*

The criticism to which the middle class was subjected almost from the outset of its career as guardian of the State ran in two main streams which have been constantly gathering in volume until, in strange and unexpected ways, they met in one overwhelming cataract. The first stream finds its source in the millenial hopes of the lower orders, which were disappointed by the French Revolution, and the second originates in the aristocratic culture which the Revolution displaced. The most typical representatives of these opposing attitudes are probably Marx and Nietzsche.

Marx, as well as the majority of the earlier Utopian Socialists, had correctly seized upon the main contradiction between the political freedom and equality promised by the Revolution and the system of economic exploitation and capitalist privilege which prevented its full realization. They accepted the middle class democratic programme of 1789, but denied that it could be realized under the middle class economic dispensation. Their opponents had also their ideals—or, at least, their “instincts”. Nietzsche, and to a lesser extent, figures like Carlyle, being principally concerned with the destruction of the old culture, denounced the political aspirations of democracy and the mediocrity of middle class values, and urged the return to a more heroic and paternal form of government. While one school concentrated its criticism upon the economic structure the other attacked the superstructure of values, and, however opposed, their common ground was a violent hatred of liberalism and a belief in some sort of planned or authoritative order. The result has been that when it came to matters of practical politics, each tended to supplement its deficiencies by borrowing from the programme of the other, until, to-day, they approximate closely in a nearly identical tyranny. Russian International Socialism soon found itself forced to return to patriotism, national tradition, and the cult of heroes and great men, while German National Socialism, adopting these from the first, yet preserved an equalitarian and anti-capitalist spirit.

The failure of the original Socialist programme can be explained by its neglect of those psychological and moral factors upon which the aristocratic school laid so much stress. Its principle authority, Marx, was a typical nineteenth century epiphenomenalist, who allowed no place in his scheme for the mental factors involved in the life of groups, and thus fell heavily into the ditch of a one-sided causation. His view that it is changes in the technique of production which alone determine the relations in which men live together, and hence the superstructure of law, philosophy and art raised as an expression of these relations, is not confirmed either from primitive or modern societies. The customs of primitive peoples vary quite independently of the manner in which they earn their living.<sup>1</sup> Christianity has existed under many different techniques of

<sup>1</sup> v. Hobhouse, Wheeler and Ginsberg. *The Social Life of Simpler Peoples*, for statistical tables clearly expressing this want of correlation.

production, and capitalism itself is equally at home under the Mikado or in democratic America. As Sombart puts it; "Quite heterogeneous culture-complexes have existed under the same economic organization and similar culture-complexes have existed under heterogeneous economic systems. We have the same capitalism in the small and in the great States, in republics and in absolute monarchies, in the Protestant and in the Catholic countries."<sup>1</sup> Single causation is a matter I have already criticized in relation to Freud's sexual theory. No single cause, for instance, is sufficient to account for modern discontent; everything has contributed its quota. That is why, in this book, it has been necessary to take up at least the major aspects of the situation in turn and to show how each leads with monotonous regularity to the same effect. The individual experiences his social environment as a whole. Every part of this social whole is alive and moving, incessantly moulding and being moulded by every other part.

It is Marx's insistence on single causation, especially his failure to take account of the important interaction of mental and material factors, which has involved him in what Sorokin calls the "incongruous mixture of fatalism and free-will" by which his theory is vitiated. While, as a determinist, he considered that men in their social relations are governed by economic forces "independent of their will", as a revolutionary he affirmed, with more common-sense, that the state of affairs which he so confidently predicted could be brought into being only through the energetic activity of his followers. The importance of ideas, at least of Marxian ideas, in producing social change, is thus admitted, and it is no longer the economic situation in itself, but this situation as experienced and interpreted by human beings, which is the decisive factor. As it happens, this theoretical contradiction has been a source of psychological strength to Marxism, for the doctrine of inevitability has given its followers confidence in their destiny while the insistence on active participation in events has avoided the effects of fatalism. It is here as in the Calvinist doctrine, where, although each man is predestined to Heaven or Hell irrespective of his own efforts, yet his efforts, should they prosper, afford a satisfactory proof that he is one of the elect.

<sup>1</sup> Werner Sombart: *Technique and Culture*, as quoted by Sorokin in his *Social Mobility*.

However much moral and psychological attitudes might have deteriorated in a capitalist environment, Marx believed that under the remorseless laws of his dialectic men would be driven towards a new classless environment which would automatically recreate these attitudes upon a sound basis. In fact, however, a new environment is the creation of human beings and not of dialectical laws. Hence it happened that while economic conditions were ripening sufficiently to make Socialism a possibility, the peoples were becoming more conservative as they were becoming more violent, until a stage was reached when they had lost the courage, independence and sense of responsibility which would have made them capable of setting up the new society, "None of us", wrote Nietzsche, "are any longer material for a society; that is a truth which is seasonable at present. It seems to me a matter of indifference that meanwhile the most shortsighted, perhaps the most honest, and at any rate the noisiest species of men at the present day, our friends the Socialists, believe, hope, dream and, above all, scream and scribble almost the opposite; in fact, one already hears their watchword of the future, 'free society', on all tables and walls. Free society? But you know, gentlemen, sure enough whereof one builds it? Out of wooden iron!"<sup>1</sup>

Thus Marx, although he was revolutionary enough in his own sphere of economics, seems to have been unquestioningly orthodox in the sphere of morals and ideals. He accepted without criticism the belief in liberty, equality, and fraternity which had been handed down by the French Revolution. Continuing in the name of the workers the eighteenth century war against privilege, he merely brought the Jacobin spirit up to date by infusing it with the mechanistic science of the nineteenth century. His frame of mind was typically expansive and energetic, and he was filled, like other of his contemporaries, with an ardent belief in progress, perfectibility, competitive struggle, and the supremacy of matter over mind, all of which doctrines have suffered considerable damage from time and criticism since his day. The internationalism of his period caused him to overlook the problem of patriotism, whose modern recrudescence has put an end to his dreams of universal brotherhood. He did not see—because he did not treat society as a whole—that with the crumbling of the economic fabric would go a

<sup>1</sup> *The Joyful Wisdom*, p. 304

crumbling of morale and a crumbling of ideals and values, and that any regeneration would have to be far more radical and complete than he had imagined. Deterioration has not been merely economic; it has been a deterioration of the very stuff of which society is composed, namely, its individuals.

### *Lower Middle Class Psychology*

Marx's other failure, to foresee the rise of the lower middle class, has also often been commented upon by writers. His dialectic saw antagonisms simplifying into a struggle between the proletariat and the monopolist employers, whereas these antagonisms—between nationalities, between minorities and majorities, between monopolists and the State, and within the labour movement itself—were to become every day more complex. The problems of over-production were to lead, as I have pointed out, to the growth of the distributive trades and of middlemen's professions, so that the lower middle class, although constantly ruined by crises as he had foretold, was constantly recruited in a new form and on an ever larger scale.

The mentality of this uncertain and wavering multitude, which constitutes an intermediate class shading off at both ends into workers and employers, is a fact of the most decisive importance. As other writers have pointed out, it holds a balancing position, and its weight thrown behind one or other of the contending parties is likely to decide every doubtful issue. Socialists, with their noses in their Marxian textbooks, tended to ignore this class until it was literally forced upon their attention, and even then it can hardly be said to have modified their dogmatic theories. So far from the proletariat leading the submissive remnants of this class in its wake, as theory had envisaged, it has been this class which, with just that much more education and influence, has on the whole been leading the proletariat. Socialists and revolutionaries in all countries have been largely recruited from its ranks. All the *déracinés* and discontented intellectuals belong here, and the politically active proletarians insensibly come under the influence of their manners and modes of thought wherever they enter into working partnership with them. In the British Communist party, for instance, the number of lower middle class elements is large, and their influence still larger. In their presence, the workers tend

to remain dumb, and it is mainly left to them to write and edit the propaganda sheets, to undertake special missions, to call meetings and to agitate generally.

It is difficult to describe the mentality of a class which is so large, so amorphous and so constantly changing. It contains as many social distinctions as there are persons. But most of these persons share the powerful feeling of not being good enough, of existing a little way above the workers, yet of not belonging to the independent master-class. They feel an acute sense of insecurity owing to the danger of losing their precarious foothold and being thrown back into the proletarian pit. Naturally they despise the working class, or rather, they fear and hate it. "The reason for this division which we might almost call enmity," says Hitler, in speaking of the relationship between these two classes, "lies in the fear that dominates a social group which has only just risen above the level of the manual labourers—a fear that it may fall back into its old condition or at least be classed with the labourers. Moreover, there is something repulsive in remembering the cultural indigence of that lower class and their rough manners with one another; so that people who are only on the first rung of the social ladder find it unbearable to have any contact with the cultural level and standard of living out of which they have passed."<sup>1</sup>

The lower middle class person is therefore the most conservative supporter of the powers that be. He is deferential to the point of obsequiousness to social superiors, for he is continually anxious to be found identified with their opinions and conventions in contrast to those of the workers. He is a staunch upholder of the family and of religion, he dislikes the ideal of equality, which threatens to lower him once more to the position from which he has so laboriously climbed, he demands a stratified society, and his snobbery finds its principal expression in loyalty to the King. He is, in fact, more bourgeois than the bourgeois, seeming to continue their forms of gentility and narrow Puritanical tradition even after they themselves have come to consider these outmoded.

But within his ranks is always that section which is being ruined—by the action, perhaps, of some new monopoly—while the late violent fluctuations of the economic system have often ruined the class wholesale and dissipated its hard-won savings

<sup>1</sup> *Main Kampf*, p. 32 (unexpurgated Ed.).

in inflation. If, in addition, the King is displaced, and social distinctions, traditional morality and religion are broken down, all the cables that hold the man of the lower middle class in position are cut, and he may conceive a violent resentment against his superiors for the, to him, quite ununderstandable betrayal of their common interests. He asks himself how the great of the earth, whom he had respected and served so faithfully, came to abandon him to his enemies, and he puts it down to base ingratitude or culpable weakness. In the circumstances of the present, he finds himself threatened equally by the monopolists—especially in his special province, the distributive trades—and by the Communists, with their preachings of equality. Thus cast down, and seeing the contempt in which both sides hold him and his ideals, he can become as violently revolutionary as he was previously timid and orthodox. All the accumulated frustration of his mean and moderate existence are loosed upon the world, and, no longer able to maintain a suburban gentility, he is driven into the vortex of the collective life, fertilizing the anger of the workers with his own slightly more theoretical education and more articulate tongue. The lower middle class has been subject to a greater degree than any other class to the repressive influences of modern conformity, has suffered more than any other from insecurity, disillusionment, disorientation and loss of prestige. It embodies in the highest degree the mentality of violence and servility typical of the times in which we live. From the political point of view, it has become a highly unstable class, constantly changing its membership, disestablished both morally and materially, fluctuating from one ideological extreme to another like a loose and dangerous cargo in the ship of State.<sup>1</sup>

### *Socialism in One Country*

The worker, of course, meets the man of the lower middle

<sup>1</sup> In Erich Fromm's book, *The Fear of Freedom*, a good description exists of lower middle class mentality, from which I have profited. Incidentally, Dr. Fromm is the only author, as far as I know, to place the characteristics of conformity and aggression in the forefront of his analysis of the modern mentality. In my view, however, he overstresses historical factors, such as the Reformation, in his explanations. As I have said in another place, history tells us how a thing came to be, not why it continues to exist. He also talks of "sado-masochism", presumably implying a sexual origin for the conformity and aggression which he describes.

class, not merely in extremist parties, but at all points in his advance to a higher cultural level. It need only be remembered that the bulk of secondary school teachers are of this origin and tend to impress their own mentality upon each new generation of workers. The executive cadres of the Trades Unions and of the great Reformist parties are filled by the lower middle class or by workers who have imbibed their attitudes. It can hardly be wondered at if these parties and Unions tend to the conservatism which is the normal characteristic of the middle class man in prosperous times. It was not long before the Marxian international and revolutionary principle was abandoned. Instead of overturning the society, the Reformist parties merely assisted it to its natural grave. By their insistence on Trade Union rates of pay they contributed to the growing inelasticity of the economic system and prevented the adjustments necessary for the working of a free economy. Their actions, praiseworthy in their humanitarian intention, only accentuated crises and created unemployment, as Marx had predicted that they would.

When conditions became more difficult, the Reformist parties floated along with all the others on the tide of social change towards monopoly and nationalism. In the trades most strongly organized, the workers gained a large measure of protection against wage fluctuations and the incidence of depression fell in consequence more heavily upon the casual and the unskilled. Eventually a labour aristocracy was formed, with interests different from those of the lower proletariat, and class warfare broke out in the labour movement itself. A tendency grew up for the monopolists of capital and labour to come together in agreement upon a policy of restrictionism which would maintain prices, and therefore wages and profits, at the expense of the general consumer. The mutual attraction of both camps towards "planning" naturally led them to the desire to safeguard home industries in general against the foreigner, and thus to intensified nationalism. The final break with the international past came in 1914, when the Socialist parties of all countries, with the exception of the exiled Bolshevik group, abandoned their common interests and rallied to the defence of their employer class. Their "betrayal"—as their opponents called it—of the international cause must be considered as one of the foundations upon which the careers of Mussolini and

Hitler were constructed immediately following the war. It led to the logical conclusion of purely national socialism on the one hand, and on the other to the creation of the Comintern to defend the under-privileged proletariat against the Capital-Labour monopoly. Social Democracy had thus broken up into its antitheses.

It was an embarrassing fact for Marxists, who regarded revolution as the fruit of capitalist contradictions, that it should have occurred only in Russia. The reason perhaps lies in the very fact that Russia was of all countries the least influenced by the psychology engendered by capitalist conditions. Its proletariat, numbering a few hundred thousand, was a negligible factor in the vast sea of peasants, and the Bolshevik leaders therefore had not the mass-following of the Social-Democratic parties in other countries. Composed mainly of intellectuals, to whom principles are of first importance, uninfluenced by that conservative pressure which numbers exert, and exiled to the central position of Switzerland, the leaders had really no incentive to abandon internationalism for patriotism.

But once the revolution had been achieved, the lower middle class again emerged to the fore. Inevitably, Russia could not form a government from the mass of illiterate peasants and the insignificant proletariat, but was forced to depend upon the help of the minor officials, bureaucrats, technicians and men with expert knowledge who, without being disloyal to the new régime, were bound to set a conservative tone. No country can afford to lose at one blow the whole of its trained executive skill. Sir Henry Maine once remarked in reference to the revolution in France that it is far easier to overturn the symbols and figureheads of power than to eradicate the engrained habits of the executive system by which the practical task of government is carried on. The monarchy of Louis XIV and his successors established a highly centralized system of government which made Paris practically the arbiter of the country's destiny, and the subsequent French Republics, according to Maine, have been nothing but the French monarchical system turned upside down, the same centralization as under the old Intendants having been reinstated by Napoleon and adhered to ever since. Likewise the absolutism of the Tsar depended upon his phalanx of 10,000 bureaucrats, and more and more

the novices of the revolution came to rely upon the lower middle class, upon the comfort of its skill in executive, on its obsequious worship of power, on its secret dislike of those it governed, on its stabilizing conservatism.

In every country, long habituation to tradition, respect for superiors, obedience to religion, loyalty to the nation, lessen the need to apply direct force for the purposes of government. These moral factors make it possible for the subject to conform voluntarily and thus without any appreciable loss of self-respect. They constitute, in fact, the basis of his freedom, and, once they are abolished, the worker is apt to find that he has lost everything but his chains. All is well, of course, so long as the people is participating actively in bringing about the immediate ends of the revolution, but once enthusiasm has subsided and the crowd must disperse back to continue its humdrum routine, no means of discipline remain but the firing squad and the secret police. Following every revolution, therefore, it appears necessary to institute a despotism which, if it can, must hold grimly on to power in the face of the machinations of its enemies and the frequent indiscipline and disillusionment of its own supporters until such time as it takes to forge new moral traditions or to revert to old ones. Here, the psychology of the leaders themselves is of some service, for it is a fact that persons of a ruthless and extremist temper will be as repressively orthodox in power as they were revolutionary in opposition.

After the usual floridly idealistic messages to the workers of the world, the Russian Revolution therefore began the task of retracing its steps in something of the same order as had the French Revolution. We can read of these developments in the continual outpourings of criticism which Trotsky levelled against the new régime, and it is worth noting how constantly he seems to draw upon the analogy of the French Revolution to describe the "Thermidorean bureaucracy" and, later, the "Bonapartism" which were growing up in Russia. Once Lenin had been so ironically embalmed to become the object of a hero-cult, it was Trotsky alone who stood by the principles of internationalism. Brilliant as a writer, an orator, a leader in the field and in the factory, the most versatile and the most cultured of all the Old Guard revolutionaries, he was in point of gifts the natural successor to Lenin, had the times not been against the principles for which he stood. Trotsky had courage,

personality and a sense of style as he coruscated across the dark European sky. But perhaps he was also too vain, too sharply contoured in all his thinking, too illuminated by his own brilliance, and thus standing in his own light, to have the patient reflective spirit that would have made of him a profound theoretician, or the willingness to wait on instinct, the slow cunning that watches and listens and senses for the pulse of a nation which has made of Stalin a great politician. Given the backing, Trotsky might well have had the tactical ability to storm other of the tottering citadels of world-capitalism, but the Russian nation no longer had his disinterested energy and Stalin's policy indubitably corresponded to the feelings of the masses.

The Stalin-Trotsky controversy was something to which the Western world stupidly paid no attention, conceiving it merely as the inconsequential squabbling of ambitious cliques. Had it done so, those mistakes of foreign policy which preceded the last war would never have been made. The question at issue was really the question of how to keep the revolution going. While there was no disagreement, at least in principle, between the leaders on the need for planning—Trotsky having been the first to advocate agricultural collectives and a Five-Year Plan—there was a bitter rift over whether Russia should rely upon the development of her own resources or whether she should seek to foment revolutions abroad in order to disintegrate her enemies before they had time to muster for a fresh attack. We probably have to be thankful for Russia's distance from other countries and for her enormous internal spaces that Trotsky's policy was not adopted. Peacefulness is no particular virtue of the Communist system, which, had it taken place in a "have-not" country, would probably have worked a greater havoc.

Russia, therefore, set out to defend the revolution by her own internal strength and ceased to rely upon the workers of the world. This meant, above all, that Russia must attempt "to catch up and surpass" the economic leadership of the Western world. The principles of communism would have to remain in abeyance until the Russian citadel was materially more secure. Hence, instead of the State withering away, the inevitable post-revolutionary tyranny was converted into a settled étatisme. The factories were taken from the control of the workers, and their managers made into leaders officially responsible for the

fulfilment of tasks allotted under the Plan. Piece-work was introduced, systems similar to those of Taylor and Bedaux were paraded under the name of a worker called Stakhanov, and the scale of rewards and wages began to approach in inequality those paid by American industry. Control passed from the Soviets to the Party and the Secret Police, and independent opinion vanished under the effects of terrorism and bribery of place. The hastily recruited bureaucracy made huge mistakes at first, but repressed the results of them by means of executions, purges and deportations, and went pounding on with its programmes, gaining in experience and efficiency.

In foreign affairs, the new orientation demanded a like sacrifice of principles. Defence of the Revolution meant defence of the Fatherland, even if revolutionary movements in other countries fared ill in consequence. Russian patriotism again became exclusive, except in so far as it was tinctured by the Messianic character inherited from the Slavophil doctrine that her mission was to teach the rest of the world how to live. There would be a new war, a breathing space must be gained for the manufacture of weapons and the speeding up of production, and every diplomatic means, including the Comintern, must be mobilized for safeguarding the Fatherland. Soon, the ideals of the Comintern came to be laughed at in Moscow. As an instrument of Russian national policy it was still useful for disrupting the internal stability of potential enemy States, but any success that Communism might have had in the rest of the world was made impossible by the existence of this Moscow organization. Based on hero-worship and the leadership principle, filled in consequence only with Yes-men, nonentities and paid spies, it was chiefly zealous in combating "deviations" from "the general line"—a line which zig-zagged from left to right and from right to left as the tactics of Russia towards her neighbours varied. Thus, once internationalism had been laid aside, the revolution became the patriotic reaction of a nation which had suffered defeat in war and had been compelled to reorganize itself for further competitive struggle. It became a continuation of the ruthless modernizing work begun by Peter the Great. The State, which was to have withered away, grew to be totalitarian, and the internationalist ideology changed into one of "Socialism in a single country", or, in other words, "National Socialism".

*National Socialism*

The Russian Revolution marks the climax of the leftward tendency to disruption which we have traced in this book from the excessive individualism of persons, businesses and parties in ever widening circles until it reached world dimensions. It took place against the post-war background of strikes, inflations, secessionist movements, guerilla activities, abdications and political murders which convulsed all Europe. The ruling classes were then everywhere driven upon the defensive. Slowly, however, the tide set in the other way. As the lack of will power among the revolutionaries themselves became apparent, the ruling classes managed to win back some of the ground lost, and Europe entered a period of reaction similar to that under Metternich and Castlereagh of a century before. The short-lived tyranny which took place in Russia must be considered the inevitable second stage of any revolutionary crisis, but the powerful *étatisme* into which it was thereafter converted belongs as part of the wave of reaction which by that time was sweeping all Europe, to that rightward tendency associated with conformity, gregariousness, majority-egotism, centralization and growth of hierarchy which has psychological roots in our time as powerful as those of the anarchic tendency. Democracy, steering out of the whirlpool of anarchy, now came to grief on the rock of dictatorship.

The two revolutions, the Bolshevik and the Nazi, should be viewed continuously against the background of the world-wide crisis of democracy. They are only the two most prominent symptoms of the violent oscillatory movement which was shaking the social fabric as a whole, and whose ultimate basis was the mentality of the individuals who composed this fabric. National figures like Mussolini, Pilsudski, Kemal, followed at a later date by others such as Metaxas, Salazar and Franco, rose above the chaos. The common factor in these dictatorships, which opposes them all to Marxism, is their nationalistic outlook. Usually they simply expressed, as did the later stages of the Russian revolution, the reaction of a nation which had been disorganized by the war and needed a strong hand to guide it back towards recovery. Or, again, they represented a defence against the recrudescence of Imperialism. During the war many of the smaller countries, and likewise the semi-colonial

territories, had profited by the pre-occupations of the great Powers to establish themselves in a more independent position, a position which was again threatened as soon as the great Powers began the work of recovering their former spheres of influence. Nationalism in the smaller countries is therefore the consequence of Imperialism. As a rule, democracy, never very firmly established in these backward lands, simply went down before military juntas, and a reversion set in towards those pre-democratic patterns which had existed before the fast-waning influence of nineteenth century France and England had made itself felt on the Continent.

This forms the context of the German dictatorship. It too was part of the movement towards national defence against foreign encroachment, sprang from the desire to rehabilitate the national honour and showed reverersions to the pre-democratic traditions of the country. According to the usual rule of group-differentiation, Germany has always sought to cultivate a tradition and an ideology distinct from that of her most powerful rivals. As early as Napoleonic times, while England was thinking in terms of utilitarianism, individual enterprise and free international trade, Fichte was preaching the autarchic doctrine of the "closed commercial system" and Hegel was evolving the organicist theory of the State. All those in other countries who, like Carlyle, have criticized democracy from the right, have been more or less under the influence of German ways of thought. Although a large measure of liberalism had long been practised in Germany, it always remained something of a paternal concession, and hardly altered the emphasis she placed upon the importance of the State, of collective effort, planning, social security and national self-sufficiency. Add to this that, being a country without many well-defined frontiers and thus forced to defend herself East and West along a very large extent of her perimeter by land forces, the Army has always been one of the first concerns of the nation, and its ideas upon order and discipline have impregnated the civil life in much the same way as the privateering spirit of the Navy, from the exploits of Drake to the latest Commando raid, has predisposed the English to individualism. Having arrived so late at the unification of her various principalities, her nationhood has never been so secure as to be taken for granted, while, having entered the economic struggle equally late, she missed

the individualist phase and relied from the first upon protection. It can be seen that Germany was the land most fitted by history and circumstance to lead the second phase of the world reaction against democracy.

Germany lagged behind so long as the sea provided the easiest means of transport for heavy goods and gave an advantage to those countries possessed of an Atlantic coast-line. However, with the development of road, rail, and finally air, transport, she became the strategic and economic pivot of Europe, and she could look forward to a glorious future as the country destined to lead the Continent, as the focus of an industry which would radiate out in all directions to the common enrichment. To achieve this destiny, of course, she had to break the French system of alliances which prevented her from exercising an influence on the Continent comparable to her potential. English sea-power was also a possible menace, for no nation likes to be permanently dependent upon the mere goodwill of another where its vital trade routes are concerned—a fact which ought to be more apparent than it is to Englishmen who obstinately refuse to relinquish the least of their strategic footholds in the Mediterranean. It is important also to remember, if we are to explain the peculiarly ambitious and impatient striving of Germany, that after the failure of her first, 1914, attempt to break this political *Einhemmung*, her position had deteriorated relatively. Although defeat had left her with her original strength unimpaired in relation to the strength of England and France, the post-war years saw the emergence East and West of her of new and infinitely stronger powers, so that the actual balance of world relationships had altered to her disadvantage, and the future to which she had looked forward as the leading industrial nation had begun to grow dim. She, like Russia, now felt the urge “to catch up and surpass” other nations if she were to maintain her place in the competitive struggle, and the growing extremism of her politics reflected her convulsive efforts to do so.

The impossibility of her position was finally brought home to her by the great depression of 1929, her imports sinking from 14,000 million marks in 1928 to 4,204 million in 1933, and her exports for the corresponding period from 12,276 million to 4,871 million. By the withdrawal of the American loans, her dependence upon foreign capital had been made manifest, and

she was all the more anxious to find a way of freeing herself from the fluctuations of external economies. With her six million unemployed, the spectre of Communism, which had so nearly overwhelmed her in 1918, again raised its head, and this time it was not an ideology of home growth, but one which threatened to place her under the domination of her Russian rival. Germany's position was one of almost hopeless stagnation, and she found herself likely to drift ever further under the political and financial power of her Western neighbours or under the tutelage of Russia.

A national group must have the hope of reaching the goal implicit in its development and traditions and, condemned to a system which is alien to these, it can only stagnate and disintegrate. The law that nations must work out their own salvation is not to be evaded by politicians who offer "self-determination" with one hand only to impose a particular brand of it, such as democracy, with the other. The Weimar Republic was an alien importation, impotent to solve the grave problems by which Germany was confronted. It did not come to maturity, as in England, after long centuries of preparatory constitutionalism, its liberties were not conceded little by little as conditions rendered them necessary and practicable, its course was not in tune with any mounting national success which would have given prestige to its political institutions. On the contrary, it was imposed at a time when democratic forms were in decay all over the world, and in the particular circumstances of disorganization and humiliation following a great war.

Unfortunately, the Weimar Republic, in an excess of zeal, went in for proportional representation which made it possible for every tiny section to air its views. "In the end", writes one independent observer, "there were no fewer than twenty-six fully fledged parties competing for the votes of the electors. The example of the multiplicity of parties in parliament was taken up in the country by organizations of all kinds. In the end, every profession, sport, industry and fad had a large number of rival organizations existing for identical purposes."<sup>1</sup> If we add to this that Germany still continued as a Federated State, although the unifying influence of the monarchy had been swept aside, and that no less than seventeen Parliamentary

<sup>1</sup> *Why Nazi*, Anon. (Faber and Faber), p. 64.

bodies were in existence, some idea may be gained of the weak and disorientated state of the country. The inevitable reaction was that "from election to election, the electorate gathered more and more into two main camps while the older parties dwindled to insignificance. By 1931, the larger part of those who supported the nationalist movement were already behind the National-Socialist party, while the Communists were taking away votes from the Socialists by leaps and bounds."<sup>1</sup> The result of this growth of extremism was that the government composed of the moderate parties found itself at length "isolated upon an ice-bound summit while an increasing majority of the nation looked on in disgust".<sup>2</sup> Democracy died its natural death, and, after an uneasy interregnum, during which the successive cabinets of Bruening, Schleicher and Papen ruled without Parliament by decrees promulgated on the authority of Hindenburg alone, the breach between the people and its representatives had to be healed by calling Hitler into power.

In this state of economic and political disorientation, it was Hitler's first task to give the individual and the nation a strong new sense of direction and to pump back self-respect into both. From the first he concentrated upon the moral factors in the situation. In his study of Marxism he had found just those weaknesses which I have described. Marxism, he saw, was an insufficient antithesis to the existing system, for it accepted all the ideological prepossessions of that system. Both were based on the doctrine of equality, which, when carried to the Communist extreme, ignores the importance of the national group and the worth of the individual personality. Marxism "strives to eliminate the dominant significance of personality in every sphere of human life and to replace it by the numerical power of the masses", but "the broad masses do not invent, nor does the majority organize and think; but always and in every case the individual man, the person. Accordingly, a human community is well organized only when it facilitates to the highest possible degree individual creative forces, and utilizes their work for the benefit of the community".<sup>3</sup> The leadership principle, based on such statements, marks Germany's abrupt return to her own aristocratic and military tradition.

On the other hand, Hitler understood that in order to defeat Marxism, what was true in Marx must be accepted and adopted.

<sup>1</sup> *ibid*, p. 65.

<sup>2</sup> *ibid*, p. 67.

<sup>3</sup> *Mein Kampf*, p. 65.

The Socialist programme of economic amelioration had to be carried out as the necessary price of winning the workers for the nation. "The question of 'nationalizing' a people", he wrote, "is first and foremost a question of establishing healthy social conditions."<sup>1</sup> Nobody can be expected to love a country in which he stands disinherited. Thus "National Socialism" emerged, which borrowed from the critics of the left their justifiable complaints against the existing economic order and took from the critics of the right their denunciation of democratic values; the two revolutionary streams which had hitherto run parallel courses since the French Revolution were fused into one. If Hitler's plan of amelioration lacked the radical elements of the Communist scheme, this was compensated by his greater understanding of the moral nature of the worker's frustration. The worker, after all, while he wants to air his grievances with a show of violence, does not want to undertake the difficult change of mental habit necessary to introduce a completely new form of society. He will be satisfied by the demagogue who promises to return to him his dignity as a human being, who does not treat him as a machine but as a valuable citizen, who eliminates his insecurity and makes an effort to provide him with the amenities for a decent life, who shows the work he does as a contribution to an ordered and comprehensible plan, and directs him through masters whom he can respect. All this Hitler did for the worker. In consequence it was not necessary for him to dispossess the capitalist; it was sufficient to force him out of his anonymous background position into the active role of political and industrial leader in order to restore the sense of corporate life.

The idea of the People's State pleased everybody. The worker was given a new feeling of self-respect, the capitalist was relieved of the Communist danger, the lower middle class was offered the prospect of a new stratified society, finally the youth, one of the most important and active elements, found here exactly what its soul was craving. In Germany, as to a large extent elsewhere, the post-war years saw hundreds of thousands of young men, many with university education, entirely without employment or prospects of any kind. These, along with the ex-officers who could not settle down to a routine occupation, Hitler enrolled in his private armies, where at least they had a

<sup>1</sup> *ibid*, p. 41.

roof over their heads, a shirt to their backs, a sense of corporate life, and an ideal to fight for. Even before the war there had been, according to one observer, a tendency among the youth to reject the ideas by which their elders lived. "There was a common tendency inherent in all the reform movements which attracted the young men of 1910; a profound distrust of rationalism, and an almost religious craving for a life of deeper significance."<sup>1</sup> Bitterly discontented with the post-war conditions which they considered that the folly of their elders had brought about, the young men tended to congregate irrespective of class-distinctions in a common revolt against the generation which had preceded them. With their rucksacks, Wanderlust and folklore they were bent on a repudiation of the doctrine of "economic man" and of the world of high capitalism and mechanized routine. They found their ideal at last in the romantic mysticism of race, the cult of the personality, and the emphasis on virility of National Socialism, and they saw the moral rehabilitation of Germany as the particular and glorious task to which they were destined.

In the sphere of foreign politics, Hitler combated democratic internationalism by a similar application of the aristocratic-cum-Socialist ideal. I have shown how democracy between nations becomes more and more of a farce as inequality develops between them. Hitler saw the possibilities of this. The Socialism which had formerly brought disunity to the nation by pitting class against class could be, as it were, projected into a Socialism which pitted the "have" and the "have-not" nations against each other. The *Herrenvolk* idea would satisfy at the same time the Marxist grievance against the rich and the whole nation's craving for self-assertion. Following out his principle that the people must not be confused and discouraged by being shown several different enemies at the same time, but must have its aggression canalized in a single direction, he used the Jew as the symbol of all its enemies. Jew and German must be opposed as the objects of a single love and a single hate. If the Home Front had collapsed during the War, it was not due to want of character in the German people but to the machinations of this secret enemy. If the workers had come to disavow the nationalist cause and to embrace Marxism, it was not due to their lack of "sound and natural instincts", but to the man-

<sup>1</sup> *Why Nazi*, p. 101.

ner in which they were being duped and their trustfulness exploited. "The more I came to know the Jew," said Hitler, "the easier it was to excuse the worker."<sup>1</sup> Jews were bracketed with anti-nationalism in all its forms. Marxists and democrats were internationalist in their philosophy, financiers in their speculative operations, and Jews by reason of their race, all forming a common conspiracy against Germany, duping her people with their ideas, ruining her with their transactions and political machinations, and bastardizing her by inter-marriage. Articulate form was thus given to the people's obscurely felt conviction that its independence was being threatened by the joint pressure of Allied capitalism on the West and of Russian ideology on the East, while the Jew was presented as the internal agent, infiltrating into the German house from either side, and showing the way to those still without the gate. The Jew was given the all-embracing role which in Russia had been assigned to the capitalist.

### *Crowd-Psychology*

When times are normal, a nation or group has a stable organization and thinks from premises and towards objectives more or less laid down in advance. But when a nation enters a period of incipient anarchy, as Germany had gradually been doing, when its integrating plan or framework is lost, when the machinery of its government is found to be semi-paralysed and the unemployed workers drift by millions on to the streets, its mentality is bound to approach that of an unorganized mob.

The psychology of crowds and mobs is different from that of groups only in the question of degree. The transition that occurs here is similar to that from normal to neurotic modes of thought in the case of the individual. It exhibits in consequence an intensification of those characteristics already described. We have heard so much about "herd-instincts", "the racial unconscious", "atavistic regressions" and so forth from psychologists to whom the behaviour of crowds appeared strange and inexplicable, that I think it important to insist that a proper explanation makes such postulates quite unnecessary. I shall recapitulate what is already known of mob-behaviour in order to demonstrate how simply it falls into the general psychological pattern delineated in this book.

<sup>1</sup>ibid, p. 64.

As soon as a sense of spiritual disorientation is felt, gregariousness increases, in just the same way as the neurotic craves for additional love and social support. There occurs a spontaneous flocking together of the people—facilitated, probably, by the breakdown of the organized life in which they are normally bound up—which must be regarded as a natural measure of self-preservation against the state of anarchy felt to be looming ahead. The aim of those who thus come together is a double one, to find security in numbers and to express dissatisfaction with the prevailing state of things. The crowd must be considered a preserver as much as a destroyer. It is certainly a symptom of anarchy, but it also seeks discipline. It may do harm in the manner in which it vents its discontent, but it is also a fumbling attempt to find for its elements a new and more purposeful direction, using, in view of its lack of an organized tradition, the only method open to it, that of trial and error.

If the essential purpose of the crowd be once rightly understood, those well-known characteristics of its psychology so admirably analysed by Le Bon fall easily into place. Lacking orientation and organization, a crowd must perforce wait, adopting an attitude of passive, expectant attention, until one of its bolder elements offers it a suggestion. It requires a leader exactly to the extent that it lacks a tradition. The suggestion, once made, will be followed more or less uncritically for the same reason, namely, because the crowd has no independent standard of its own by which to measure its value. Again, for the same reason, a crowd will be fickle; it has no element of stability to prevent its thoughts from running from one extreme to another.

The quality of crowds naturally deteriorates as they become more disorientated. While the normal group, as McDougall has rightly observed, affords a traditional discipline which often raises the conduct of the individual to a higher level, the psychology of the unorganized mob carries the individual down to a lower level of response than that which he would make by himself. The individuals who participate in a crowd are each passive as the crowd itself is passive. They wait on the crowd as the crowd waits on the leader. In their desire for guidance, they are ready to abandon their powers of judgment, their independence and sense of personal responsibility, and they throw themselves into a state of absolute conformity to mass sug-

gestion. The result of this is that they will be more influenced by appeals to their emotions than by appeals to their abandoned reason. They will become impatient if forced to listen to argument, for what they want is certainty and not to be asked to decide among the doubtful weighing of pros and cons. The emotionality of crowds is no evidence that we have to do here with primitive instincts breaking through the civilized crust, as some psychologists have supposed.

The crowd then, not caring for fine distinctions or qualifications, desires to see all its problems illuminated by some large generalization, and, once this generalization has been established in its mind, it will seize upon every instance that reinforces it without enquiring whether there are contrary instances. In fact, it will indignantly reject the very thought of contrary instances, because they threaten to destroy the sense of security which the generalization has achieved. Credulous and suggestible as the crowd may be, easily led away as it is by words, images and false analogies, it is immovably obstinate where its fixed ideas are concerned. The elimination of qualifications simplifies its thought to a series of strongly-held contrasts and antitheses. Right is opposed to wrong, black to white, strong to weak, above to below, without any intervening stages. This in itself is sufficient to give its attitudes their extremist colouring. The crowd sees everyone as either for or against its aims, and those who are not on the extreme political left must belong to the extreme political right.

Le Bon has insisted that the crowd, while it is violent, is essentially conservative. It is useless to expect from it any welcome for suggestions which imply novelty or require from it effort or change of habit. The crowd has no will and is incapable of making fundamental changes. Ideas and images already engrained in the mind of each of its members are those which evoke the readiest response, and the call to old prejudices and ready-made attitudes and feelings, such as patriotism, anti-Semitism, anti-Capitalism, will nearly always succeed. Each assembled individual wants to hear public expression of what he already knows. He wants the doubts that have arisen concerning his old belief to be dispelled by the confirmation of numbers. Assertion, reiteration, contrast, generalization, with constant illustration of a single point from different angles, are therefore the necessary means of leading crowds. Symbols,

badges, slogans, and any form of visual or auditory image are more effective than argument or intellectual appeal. The crowd must have everything exaggerated and brought home to it in headlines. Above all, being disorientated, it wants to be offered a concrete goal—a spectacular parade with torches, community singing, the sacking of a ghetto—which releases its aggressions and strengthens its sense of solidarity. Every member then returns home feeling that something has been achieved, an advance has been made, a direction found, the isolation of his personal life ended, and his significance raised. Demonstrations of this kind, often repeated, help to solidify the social life, and bring a disrupted community back to its old conservative tradition with a new emphasis.

There is one constant factor in the psychology of the crowd which is a sure indication of its basic nature—it will always adhere to what is strong. It loves strong images, strong emphases, strong contrasts, strong leaders, and it cares little for pity, kindness or any of the gentler virtues. "Crowds", says Le Bon, "exhibit a docile respect for force, and are but slightly impressed by kindness, which for them is scarcely more than a form of weakness. Their sympathies have never been bestowed upon easy-going masters, but on tyrants who vigorously oppressed them. It is to these latter that they always erect their loftiest statues. It is true that they willingly trample on the despot whom they have stripped of his power, but it is because, having lost his strength, he has resumed his place among the feeble, who are to be despised because they are no longer feared."<sup>1</sup> "The psyche of the broad masses", wrote Hitler, "is accessible only to what is strong and uncompromising. Like a woman whose inner susceptibilities are not so much under the sway of abstract reasoning, but are always subject to the influences of a vague emotional longing for the strength that completes her being, and who would rather bow to the strong man than dominate the weakling—in like manner the masses of the people prefer the ruler to the suppliant and are filled with a stronger sense of mental security by a teaching which brooks no rival than by a teaching which offers them a liberal choice. They have very little idea of how to make such a choice, and thus are prone to feel that they have been abandoned. They feel very little shame at being terrorized intellectually, and they

<sup>1</sup> Le Bon: *The Crowds*, p. 40.

are scarcely conscious that their freedom as human beings is impudently abused."<sup>1</sup>

Leaders are endowed with mythical qualities, and just as it only angers a crowd to attempt to show it instances which disprove a generalization in which it wishes to believe, so it would be impossible to persuade it of the fallibility of its leaders. The more the superiority of the leader is enhanced—the more he is conceived as set above ordinary human desires and frailties—the greater is the significance of his worshippers. As so often among ancient peoples, however, wickedness or immorality is no disqualification for godhead, since gods and leaders are worshipped primarily, not as moral beings, but as powerful beings. Wickedness, indeed, may be the sign of the superman who can dare everything which the ordinary person finds beyond him. On a lower scale, all the gangsters and murderers of film-land furnish the individual with a similar satisfaction, so that he leaves the cinema with a more powerful and elastic stride.

Paradoxically, the leader is nearly always considered as kind. I have already quoted Prof. Dewey's remark to the effect that we praise our most ruthless egoists for their love of children and flowers or their kindness to aged relatives. In the same way dictators are always posed patting the heads of school children. The crowd must believe that the leader understands and loves it, shares its simple joys and sorrows, and is as tender to it as he is ruthless to its enemies. He partakes, in fact, of the double character assumed by the modern State, and already described. The feeling of the crowd is strictly egalitarian, and any preference given to one of its members is resented. Whatever privilege there must be can only be stomached provided it is shown as a return for outstanding services to the leader, for defending his life, or for aiding his rise to power, in which case the privileged person takes on a special glamour; he has done for the leader what each member of the crowd would have liked to have done, and the justice of the reward is well understood. Those who aspire to any secondary power must always claim that they act as the servant of the leader, thus placing themselves on the same level as the people, who are also his servants. The leader is thus well guarded, and an act of treachery or usurpation of his position is far more difficult than it seems.

The crowd is as vain as a woman, and must be vastly flattered

<sup>1</sup> *Mein Kampf*, p. 48.

political revivalism. The organized nation sank to the level of a mob, but the nature of this mob was to reaffirm the fundamental habits and traditions of the nation. National Socialism, while it acted as a solvent on the old order, did succeed in producing a new feeling of orientation. Society, threatened with dissolution into anarchy, was pulled violently back into conformity. The individual and the group, at the moment when both reached the lowest depths of discouragement, reacted by asserting their significance in the most extreme form.

It is impossible to understand the revolutionary movements of our time except as a consequence of the preceding Liberal era. This era, whatever its contributions in the beginning, ended by robbing the individual of every value—social, moral, cultural, religious, and even of the value of himself. Our age, in all its anarchic formlessness, then became eminently suited to the development of an adventurous Caesarism. The tendency of such a time is for the more daring spirits to become impatient of the restraints imposed by the mediocrity of the multitude. They rise in revolt and, recognizing the inner worthlessness of the masses, they exploit their fevered fears and hatreds for their own ends. The dictator carries to the extreme the demoralization of those over whom he rules. He cannot do otherwise, for it is only by pandering to their most evil propensities that he can persuade them to trust him with the power. His abuse of them is conditioned by the fact, noted by Nietzsche, that "the weak force the strong to become their hangman". He humbles, impoverishes, equalizes and collectivises the people, while he keeps it employed in building pyramids or making war. He must seek, as Stalin did, to kick from behind him the ladder by which he climbed into power, even to decimating the whole generation from which he sprang, so that in the next he will stand supreme and be endowed with all the authority of Tradition. His most bitter enemy, of course, is the oligarchy, in his own or neighbouring countries, for it was by appealing to the mob against its privileges that he rose. But once he has successfully taken the tendency to uniformity to its extreme, he will in his turn create a hierarchy among his followers. If he aims at any kind of permanency, he must build up his country, introduce stability and order, and bring the crowd back to those fixed habits and traditions which it was its revolutionary object to seek out.

## SOCIAL PSYCHOLOGY AND GOVERNMENT

*The Aim of Government*

**A**SOCIAL psychology is concerned with prevention; a psychology of the individual is concerned with cure. The social psychologist is in the position of the man who insists that if epidemics are to be avoided there must be better housing and sanitation, in contrast to the doctor who administers doses and injections once the epidemic has broken out. His preoccupation, in fact, is with that indefinable quality, morale, on which the happiness and creativity of a people depends.

Undoubtedly, social psychology should be more than merely theoretical. Practice is not the sole test of a theory's truth, but we should do well to suspect those involved hypotheses which have no applicability at all. It is, I think, to the legislator that the practical social psychologist will want to address himself. It is far from his ambition, of course, to usurp the functions of the legislator, but it should be possible for the legislator to turn to him for advice just as he already turns to the economist. If the economist can predict the effect which some proposed fiscal measure is likely to produce on wages and prices, so the social psychologist ought to be ready with an answer when asked what will be the moral effect of, say, some new security measure or educational reform.

The social psychologist should not indulge in any useless spinning of Utopias. He is too well aware that society is a natural process with laws and tendencies of its own which cannot be arbitrarily set aside. But neither does he think that, because this is so, we are altogether helpless to modify events. The whole task of science is to bring natural processes under human control. The problem before him—and before the legislator—is how to make a realistic use of a given situation. We are limited by the fact that we cannot undo the past; we cannot, for instance, abolish the industrial revolution and its consequences,

nor can we revive a system of liberalism which, either deliberately or through inadvertence, weakness and want of foresight, we have allowed to die. But we are nevertheless always free towards the future. Each moment of our history contains as many potentialities for good as for evil, and there is no point at which a seemingly inalterable tendency cannot be modified for the better.

The realization that we always possess choice and free-will seems to me a point worth driving home at present. During the nineteenth century the optimistic assumption held sway that society would work out its own solutions if left to take its natural course. Any interference with its mechanisms was held likely to be harmful, and government was reduced to the role of a policeman whose impersonal arm regulates the flow of human traffic. We have lived through this experiment. We can concede that society is in some sense a self-righting mechanism, but we know that, if such a mechanism is left to itself, reactions follow blindly upon events and that contradictions accumulate until they come to the point of explosion and reach their end only in the midst of human ruin and misery. In essence, it is because a *laissez-faire* attitude towards this mechanism has proved intolerable that we have been driven towards State control. But because State control has grown up gradually, we have not yet realized the new orientation which it demands of us. State control, too, could be left to a sort of *laissez-faire*. If our rulers proved to be weak and shortsighted men, content to drift passively with circumstances, unable to see the possibilities of the new situation, State control would bring all the disadvantages and tyrannous abuses of which this form of government is capable. At present, indeed, nothing is more apparent than this danger. We see that although the State is co-ordinated at almost every level, yet upon the highest level of all—that of the goal towards which all subsidiary planning should tend—there is no orientation and scarcely even an awareness of the need for such orientation.

I would say, then, that the first possibility which our new situation offers us is the possibility of choice itself. State control is an instrument thrust into our unwilling hands, of which, if we were to rise to the occasion, we could make a bold use for constructive ends. But for this we need statesmen, not opportunist politicians. It is the distinguishing mark of the statesman that he

guides himself by a clear consciousness of the end which he wishes to see realized in society. His acts of government are not haphazard decisions dictated by the moment; they are systematically made, and, integrated together, they support each other's effects and converge towards the end he has in view. It is perhaps the most useful task of a writer to propose the end which the statesman can apply. The writer has not the intimate acquaintance with political problems which would allow him to make concrete suggestions, but he may possess a more synoptic grasp of essentials precisely because he is detached from the minutiae of administrative business and the turmoil of party struggle.

Almost every writer on politics has in fact endeavoured to lay down some principle that would give coherency to policy. Each has tried to answer the question, "What is the end of government?" In Hobbes and Locke, the rather negative end proposed is to preserve social institutions. But to-day it is not a question of hanging on to the shreds and tatters of our institutions in opposition to a frustrated population which would pull them down. Bentham's slogan was the more positive one that the end of government is "the greatest happiness of the greatest number". But to-day Bentham's happiness has gone beyond recall. I will therefore try to formulate the fundamental aim which seems appropriate to our own day and which flows very simply from the whole analysis made in this book. I will suggest that "the end of government is the worth of the individual".

In a time like the present I think it is not superfluous to place so much emphasis upon the fact that the individual should be the hinge of all our social plans. The egotism of the majority now glorifies itself in the worship of the community and is of so tyrannical a nature that it impatiently tramples upon the independence of the private person, which alone makes the community a living thing. The financial oligarchy, with its eyes upon foreign competitors, finds a certain interest in encouraging this egotism and in promoting the aggressive idolatry of the Nation, or the State or the Race. The bureaucrats, with their desire to simplify administrative problems, are happiest when persons can be treated as cyphers. But it is the individual who is the moving force of history, the creator of every achievement, the source of all values, the unit of every social aggregate, the very life of society's otherwise mechanical organization. The

individualism of the last century and the étatisme of this are, in their extreme forms, opposite fallacies, for the individual cannot flourish as an isolated unit nor can the State be regarded as an end in itself. If, in abandoning individualism in this sense we should run to the opposite extreme and forget the individual altogether, we should be renouncing the entire English political tradition.

*Reform in the Factory*

The thesis put forward, it remains to ask whither it leads. We have to answer Nietzsche's question: "Under what conditions can the plant, Man, best be made to flourish?" Under *laissez-faire* this plant was allowed to grow rank, and man, for all his liberty, is to-day little better than a straggling weed. The experience helps us to realize that the conception of the individual held by liberal democracy was always too abstract and doctrinaire a view. Liberty without guidance is too hard for most men. The pathological craving of the present day for security and protection bear witness to the fact that what men require is a standard rule of conduct and the orientation provided by prescribed duties. In the social vacuum which, given the absence of all traditions, ties, standards and sense of direction, is all that we are left with to-day, the powers of the individual remain unco-ordinated and disperse into anarchy. Thus the most important task of the moment is to prune and train the individual against a background of revived social institutions. This is by no means a simple proposition; it implies rebuilding institutions with human material which is at first wholly inadequate, while recreating individuality without the institutions which furnish the necessary framework. Obviously it would be far easier for legislators to use the present omnipotence of the State to suppress independence still further in the interests of tidy government.

Institutions are not ends in themselves; they are made for man and they must answer man's specific needs. Since work and love occupy the greater part of a man's thoughts and activities, it is by creating institutions which will give stability to his relationships in these two spheres that the reconciliation between the individual and the society is most likely to be brought about. In the case of work, it is, of course, the factory which suggests itself as the basic social institution. The factory should

cease to be a mere place of work and should become a social centre and local tie, with a corporate spirit of its own.

This ideal obviously requires a change of heart on the part of the employer. Nothing could be more dangerous to the employer himself than the survival of those theories—still ardently propagated by old-fashioned economists of the Hayek-Robbins school—which comfort him with the assurance that his former way of life is sufficient to meet the challenge of modern conditions. In all countries capital has long been tending to pass out of the direct personal control of its owners and to be concentrated under the impersonal management of banks, trustees, financiers and big corporations. The result is that we can no longer speak of the bourgeoisie as a single homogeneous class, but must see it as divided into two half-distinct groups, one of which, the small, active hierarchy, has in its hands the whole management of industry and public affairs, while the other constitutes an inactive and amorphous mass of stockholders. This latter—a kind of *Lumpenbuergertum*, if I may be allowed to coin such a term—is a true class of “idle rich”. Its wealth is not coupled with any social duties or responsibilities, it is for the most part without the culture to patronize the arts or to add to the elegancies of life, it is, in short, neither useful nor ornamental, but is made up of a vast body of Philistines whose only watchword is “comfort”. These are the human embodiment of that over-capitalization which clogged the wheels of industry during the period between the two wars and which was politically represented by the conservative gerontocracy ruling in England for the major portion of that time.

It is obvious that the members of this *Lumpenbuergertum* exist in a position similar to that of the absentee landlords in the last days of feudal society, and that the active capitalist and manager, so long as he is shackled to their interests, is in danger of sharing their fate. The joint-stock organization of industry has decayed like other democratic forms and is now a far from adequate method of social control. It requires modification to enable the employer of the future—if he is to survive—to act as master rather than as agent, so that he may rule his men more personally and paternally. If the factory is to be made a social institution, the employer must be dragged from his anonymous background position to become the visible embodiment of authority. He must seek to win the respect of his men, he must

provide for their welfare, he must preside over their sports and other recreations, and must show the qualities of leadership and personality generally. His failure to do these things would result in the management of businesses devolving more and more upon the bureaucrats of a centralized State.

The State should resist its own inclination and the popular demand to take over everything itself. It is not desirable that it should be saddled with the whole burden of running industry nor is it desirable that the mass of the population should have no masters or intermediate ties between itself and its central organ. The functions of government can never lie more than partially with the central authority, but, even under the strongest despotisms, the administration of detail must be delegated to an independent governing class, of landlords and nobles, or of employers and managers, as the case may be. The stability of the State is based on the aptitude for government of the class which backs it, and it is important to-day to ensure to this class the necessary conditions for a vigorous development of initiative and enterprise. Vigour is not the quality of bureaucrats and it will not be the characteristic of a country run by bureaucrats.

The State must never lose its position as arbitrator between the different interests. Its prestige will be quickly destroyed if every grievance of worker, employer and consumer is to be laid directly at its door. While it should exercise its discipline against the employer who still fails in his social responsibilities towards either his workers or the consumer, it should strive to uphold more than it is inclined to do at present the moral authority of the employer class as a whole. And while thus fostering the spirit of leadership in the employer class, it should strive equally to restore the dignity and the willingness to obedience of the worker. The State has now the opportunity to heighten the importance of work by planning it in the national interest. The worker has to be made to feel that his efforts are needed by the community and that both he and his masters are subordinate to a definite social end. Production for use instead of production for profit relieves him of the indignities of exploitation. The more one can introduce order into the economic system, eliminating the excrescences which have grown up and putting an end to the deterioration in the quality of goods offered to the public, the more will the worker's pride in his job be fostered.

The schemes for social security which have already been

promulgated are obviously valuable, for nothing could have been more undermining to morale than the gnawing sense of economic uncertainty under the Liberal system. But if we say "social security" and leave it to look after itself, the result may be the very opposite of a healthy communal life. Behind the popular agitation for these welfare measures there still lurks the bad collective psychology of dependence which has made them necessary, and it hangs very much on the manner of their application whether they reinforce this bad psychology or become its antidote. Security is two-faced. It can provide the basis for the worker's independence, or it can be used to pamper him still further, increasing his social irresponsibility and conviction that he has the right to live for nothing. In the hands of short-sighted politicians, social security would be nothing but a policy of bribery and corruption. It would weaken the individual until tyranny sprang out of his weakness. It would reduce the population to a characterless uniform mass who would have to be driven to work by savage taskmasters and continuously regaled on tinned foods and cinemas.

Only unprincipled demagogues would dare to assert that security and freedom could be joined together in the same political system. Authority is inseparable from responsibility. If man is responsible for his own fate, then he must necessarily be free and under his own authority. If the State or the master is responsible for his fate, then these must necessarily assume the authority to direct his acts. Once the economic compulsion inherent in a free economy is removed, the reversion to the more direct forms of control practised by a paternal society becomes automatic. This control will prove harsh only to the extent that the workers' allegiance has not been won. Hence the importance of coupling social security with every measure which can be devised for building up his morale. As far as possible the State should provide only the minimum of security, leaving it to the employer to supplement the insurance schemes it offers with amenities of his own. If employers cannot compete together in attracting labour, they will be robbed of their initiative, and if workers look only to the State for their rewards, it will be impossible to build up the factory as a local tie.

Finally, with all due respect to the economists, I would like to submit that here too a certain revision of attitude may be necessary. It must seem to the layman that the classical school of

Smith and Ricardo was too preoccupied with the factor of wealth and insufficiently so with the factor of health. Wealth is not an end in itself; the end is the moral well-being of the citizen. It is as vain for a nation as it would be for an individual to strive for the accumulation of the maximum quantity of exchangeable values at the cost of unhappiness and of physical and moral deterioration. That way lies the exhaustion of the human creative forces which are the ultimate producers of wealth. It is by no means to be received as an axiom that the cheapest method of production is the one always to be preferred; there may be many social reasons why it is less desirable than a more expensive method.

This axiom is the root of the whole type of economy which ignored the existence of States and Nations and envisaged the world as composed exclusively of individual traders exchanging their products in a free cosmopolitan market. It was considered cheaper, and therefore better, if countries with special facilities for, say, shipbuilding or textile manufacture were to concentrate their energies on these, exchanging their unwanted surpluses of the commodities so produced against the similar surpluses of a country specialized entirely in, say, agricultural products. In this way, admittedly, the particular greatness of England was built up. As List pointed out, such a mode of procedure always favours the foremost industrial country. By drawing off from the less developed lands the raw materials by which they might have built up a manufacturing power of their own and by exporting back to them the finished products to flood their market, the country with an initial start can hope to retain its supremacy over every competitor. But other countries have learned this, and the world did not develop in the cosmopolitan way. The theories of the economists have been falsified by events and have to-day the appearance of an unreal scholasticism. We have to rid ourselves of the lingering pre-conceptions which a century or more of this economic train of thought has left behind. The fact that dependence on abroad is a national danger in the present state of the world is of minor importance compared to the social undesirability of the system itself. In this way hopelessly lop-sided economies come into existence. Agricultural countries cannot progress towards an industrial status and the potentialities of their citizens remain unused. Industrial countries allow agriculture to die out and

their urban populations decay for want of replenishment from the more vigorous countryside.

The type of economy which suits our own period was foreshadowed by List and has been outlined in more modern form by writers like Othmar Spann. It is, above all, a balanced economy. Agriculture and industry are developed in proportion to each other. Coal-mining is developed in proportion to the steel industry, the steel industry in proportion to the need for steel in other manufactures, and all manufactures in proportion to the needs of the consumer. Emphasis is upon the home market rather than upon exports. In place of the cosmopolitan idea of over-specialization and exchange, each country is regarded as one vast concern, with all its parts fully articulated and integrated together as an organic whole. Infant industries need protection until they can attain to their proper status within this whole, and growth of the economy is a growth of the whole, and not of one or other of its limbs to the neglect of the main body. This modern type of mercantilism is the logical economics of State Control. From the point of view of the psychologist, its greatest advantages are the social ones. The inhabitants of such a country enjoy the maximum variety of occupations, there is scope for the development of all potentialities, and these potentialities cross-fertilize each other to promote the nation's creativity.

### *Reform in the Home*

In this book, I have regarded the economic and the sexual problems as intimately related. Work, if it is to be gladly undertaken, must not only possess social significance and be a means of relating man to the community, but must have a more immediate point of reference in the family. It is through his ability to support a family and through feeling himself master in his own house that man acquires the necessary self-respect to acquiesce in his subordinate position in the social hierarchy. The individual is not merely a member of society; he must also feel himself unique, a little king. If once he regards himself as lord and master of the small plot of ground on which he stands, it will not matter so much that his life is circumscribed in other directions. The home is the primary social institution; its successful rebuilding would not only guarantee social stability but

would be the individual's best protection against those tyrannous abuses which an all-powerful State could practise upon a mobile population.

The war has brought the problem of family life to a crisis, and there is general recognition that one of the government's first duties is the rebuilding of houses, the resettlement of the population and the stimulation of the birth-rate. It is impossible to expect a high morale from people left to foster in slum conditions. Quite apart from the filth and poverty, such conditions give those who suffer them the feeling that their lives are of no value. Provision of decent houses in decent surroundings for every family is therefore the most economical way in which the State can win for itself the loyalty of those it governs and eliminate the present waste of human material due to a discouraging environment. But here again, the problem is not to be solved by the mere mechanical building of new houses, for the most important element in the situation is the mental attitude of those who are to live in them. Although there are incomparable opportunities in the home for the attainment of a full life, it is doubtful whether a population as frustrated as the present one will know how to make use of them. The home, however outwardly attractive, will remain a prison so long as the sexual question is not solved.

Each problem hinges upon all the others. The restoration to man of his human dignity and of his pride in his job by the means already discussed will obviously react favourably on his sexual attitude. But the main part of the solution will naturally have to be contributed from the side of the women. Bedevilled as woman now is by ideas on "equality", it is not to be believed that the mere provision of houses will automatically stimulate her to turn them into homes. A weak and short-sighted government will undoubtedly try to shirk the difficulty and unpopularity of the woman question, and will be content to offer the bribery of a house just as it will be content to offer unqualified social security. Here again, what is needed from the side of the State is a policy which combines a judicious discipline with a restoration to women of her true functions and her sense of worth.

It hardly needs to be said that nothing is more dangerous to the State nor more prejudicial to the mental balance of the children who will constitute the succeeding generations than

any dissatisfaction on the part of women. Women must not be left discontented, and a solution to their problems must be found, not only for their sake, but for everyone's sake. But does the solution lie in the direction we are at present taking? Can it be said that the approach to equality and sexual uniformity which has been in progress for a considerable time has indeed rendered women happier, or cemented the home, or stimulated the birth-rate, or improved the upbringing of children? I have given my answer already in a previous chapter. It is that men and women have seldom been so unhappy together as at present and that there has seldom been so chaotic a condition of sexual weakness and maladjustment. There is little doubt that the standard of home life would be enormously raised if woman would cease to regard herself as "too good" for the job of providing comfort and making herself and her surroundings a centre of happiness. It is more happiness, not more production, which the world chiefly needs to-day, and woman is so urgently required for her true function of promoting this happiness that it is lamentable to see her wasting her time in factories. Even production would benefit indirectly, for a man will not work with enthusiasm for the support of a home unless the woman will consent to make it the centre of their joint relaxation and amusement. Woman's success in the home is an incentive to man to achieve more at his work, while a dreary home and an absent wife leaves him without a worth-while objective.

Naturally, a return to the old point of view that woman's primary function is child-bearing and home-tending must be made with a difference. The character of the home has changed in the meanwhile. In an agrarian society it was an isolated but sizeable community of children, children's children, relations and retainers, a little world in itself wherein woman could find a full life and a sufficiency of human contacts. The modern home is a far more restricted unit than formerly, but it also exists in an urbanized environment which makes it, at least potentially, more accessible to social contacts. But at present there is an almost entire absence, especially in the suburbs and in the larger urban centres, of any civic or social life to which the home could be related. Thus it is plain that to recreate the home involves recreating the environment in which the home is set. If woman's feeling of loneliness and isolation is to be overcome, towns will have to be gradually decentralized and rebuilt as

true communal units, a programme requiring many years of planned and methodical work. It will be the woman's function to relate the home to the social milieu thus created and to help build up a true civic spirit in the area in which she lives.

For women who prefer to remain unmarried or for those whose marriage is insufficient to give them full opportunities for self-expression, a wide variety of supplementary occupations ought to be left open. Once we abandon the standpoint of abstract right, the problem of finding these openings for woman's activity becomes a purely practical one. The principle upon which we can proceed to judge what occupations are or are not within her province is very simple—almost, one might say, a principle of physiology. As I have stressed in an earlier chapter, the life of woman is full of variations. Apart from the minor monthly variations in her energy and capacity to work, there are long periods when she is preoccupied with child-birth and nursing in a way that precludes her altogether from participating in economic life. Industrial work, being done to the rhythm of the machine, demands continuous application and is therefore properly the work of man. Women who attempt to compete in this sphere will always find themselves at a disadvantage and will always feel dissatisfied in consequence. Nor is it good, physically or morally, that they should refuse to recognize their limitations in respect of this kind of work.

It follows that the line demarcating the respective spheres to be allotted to the two sexes is determined more justly by physiology than by abstract theories and prejudices. Outside the factory, there is still abundance of work fit for every type of feminine talent. From social work and nursing, to the home production of luxury articles more suitable to craftsmanship than to machinofacture, up to the highest spheres of art and learning, women would have the whole range of occupations to choose from. The only stipulation must be that such work as she chooses must not bind her for set hours to the tending of a machine or to an office stool, that she should be free to vary her times according to her inclinations, and to put aside other matters when the duties of her home call her away. The question of whether woman is equal in talent to man is, from this point of view, a sterile one. The competitive struggle between the sexes to prove which is the most talented, and also the parallel struggle for equal pay for equal work, are side-

stepped. We can admit that both sexes are equally talented and that the work of both is equally important to society. This does not mean however that the sexes are identical, or physiologically suited to identical work. Man's efforts can be continuous, woman's should be variable; each sex has its special sphere.

We come now to the question of children. Just as it is useless to provide social security unless the work-relationship between master and man is improved, or houses unless the sex-relationship is improved, so it is useless to provide family allowances without attending to the psychological side of the question. The parent-child relationship must be put once more upon a stable basis. Psychologically, we have noted that children give the parents a little world to manage on their own authority. The authority and responsibility for managing this little world cannot be filched from the parents without killing their interest in producing children and wrecking all attempts to build up the home. Security of employment and a general wage sufficient to cover the cost of supporting a family is and always has been quite enough by way of economic incentive to ensure the maintenance of the population. If, in addition, parents are to be relieved of the necessity of making any sacrifice at all, their general sense of social responsibility, of which the existence of children is the stimulant, will be weakened. Likewise, if the children feel themselves beholden to the State rather than to their parents, authority and discipline in the home become impossible.

Children serve the parents' ambition and act as an immortal extension of their personalities. In an anonymous, equalitarian society the child is soon submerged in the mass and the parents' desire to perpetuate themselves becomes unrealizable. If the sense of family continuity and tradition is to be cultivated, it is essential that the children should not be levelled down at each generation by attendance at an equalitarian school, but that the parents should be free to pass on to them the privilege of their status as well as the goods and monies which their efforts have acquired. They must retain the right to plan for their children's welfare and to push them as high in the social scale as their influence and income permit. A system of compulsory State education, bureaucratically conceived and universally applied, is an idea antipathetic to the whole conception of individuality. Whether the State really benefits from producing a machine-made population of nonentities and mediocrities is

doubtful, for, however immediately easy this population may be to govern, in the long run the paralysis of its originality and creative powers will lead to the nation's downfall.

The structure of society has often been likened to a sieve. For generations it has sifted and sifted the human material of which it is composed, keeping back the coarser grain and allowing through the finer. The result of this process is that at present talent is very largely concentrated in the higher strata of the population. It is immaterial from our point of view whether the fact is to be explained by heredity or by environment. If we suppose that the higher proportion of talent among the more fortunate classes is the result of hereditary differences, then there is no sense in forcing down potentially superior children to the level of the mass. If, on the other hand, the intellectual superiority of the upper classes is due to the better environmental start obtained by the child, there is still no sense in nullifying this start by placing the child below the cultural level which it has experienced in its home surroundings. We cannot afford to risk losing the results of the long sifting process which has been going on in society for the sake of the outworn democratic dogma of "an equal start in life". It is enough that education be placed within the reach of all and that the system of state scholarships be extended to allow whatever talent exists in the lower strata to come to the top. If this talent is genuine, the fact that it started at the bottom merely sharpens striving and acts as a spur rather than as a handicap.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Lest my assertions in this paragraph be doubted, I will quote statistics: "The figures show that the upper and professional classes, composing only 4.46 per cent. of the population, produced 63 per cent. of the men of genius, while the labour, artisan and industrial classes, composing about 84 per cent. of the population, produced only 11.7 per cent. of the greatest leaders of Great Britain. The percentage of British men of genius produced by common labour and artisans is especially low—2.5 per cent. for 74 per cent. of the total population. Here are taken British men of genius from the beginning of the history of England up to the twentieth century. During the nineteenth century, according to A. H. H. MacLean's *Study of 2,500 Eminent British Men of the Nineteenth Century*, the share of aristocracy rather increased (26 per cent. of all leaders instead of 18.5 per cent.) while the share of the professions increased also (49 per cent. instead of 44.5 per cent.). The share of labour and the artisans decreased, in spite of the increasing literacy and greater educational facilities for the lower classes of the nineteenth century. According to the more detailed study of Frederick Adam Woods, during the first quarter of the nineteenth century the artisans and labour class produced only 7.2 per cent. of the men of genius in England, instead of 11.7 as during the preceding centuries, and during the second quarter of the nineteenth century only 4.2 per cent."—Sorokin: *Social Mobility*.

We need, in fact, not uniform education, but differential education, with schools suited to every variety of taste and purse. It is in the interest of social stability and of family continuity that the existing social grades should not be disturbed, and that the son should continue in the footsteps of his father in default of some special talent which qualifies him for scholarship, or of energetic parents anxious to push him above their level and prepared in consequence to make special sacrifices to further his career. But this does not mean, of course, that we should swing from a policy of regimentation to a policy of *laissez-faire* in education. The State has an interest equal to that of the parents in the upbringing of its future citizens, and it undoubtedly falls within its province to lay down a national policy to be adhered to by all schools, whether under its own or private management. If it allows the maximum differentiation, it must also be prepared to integrate. It is obvious that, in the past, any conception of the aim of education has been lacking, and that at present both public and private teaching is drifting along in a directionless fashion. In the absence of a true goal, attention has been concentrated upon mere instruction, and the pupil has been sent out into the world without any feeling that what he has learned is a preparation for what he has to do. His education has not distinguished him as an individual, but has left him equipped, like millions of others, with a quantity of facts serviceable for anything or nothing. He has acquired no practical ability to handle a particular job, and he is consequently without that self-confidence which practical ability gives. Except in the public schools, no effort has been made to train the moral character. There is no surer way of provoking social discontent than by means of an education which enlarges general ideas above the level at which they can be satisfied by the opportunities which life has to offer.

The great advantage of a planned economy is that it enables us to foresee the number of vacancies that will occur in industry and to correlate education accordingly. The State would not be obliged to train everybody to the same standard of mediocrity, and the child would from the beginning work towards settled prospects; his education would have a goal and he would be able to conceive it as a preparation for a definite kind of life. It is not suggested that the technical education of the pupil is the whole end in view. Practical ability he must cer-

tainly acquire, but concentration upon mere technique remains specialist and one-sided. Writers have been tireless in pointing out that the primary aim of education is not to impart information but to train the character. Its syllabus ought therefore to remain grounded upon the humanist disciplines, which alone are capable of widening the intellectual horizon and of imparting to the pupil an understanding of the relationship between his speciality and the whole of life. In fact, the humanist and the technical aspects ought to be so closely correlated that the higher and more responsible the post for which the child is destined in later life, the more thorough should also be his grounding in the humanities. For the lowest class of manual labourer, any ability to think in general terms is inadvisable, as leading to personal unhappiness and social discontent, while for the highest class of chemist or engineer a thorough classical education is extremely important, if specialists are not to be produced who are incapable of appreciating the general culture of the time and who are narrow-minded and irresponsible as citizens. Finally, by attention to physical training, the State has the opportunity to complete the work of raising morale. Games and sports teach the child *esprit de corps*, boxing, wrestling, and military training endow him with the capacity to defend himself physically, without which capacity no man can really possess a feeling of self-confidence in life. It is the business of education to see that the individual enters society not only generally cultured and technically equipped for the position which he has to fill, but physically and morally developed, endowed with independence, self-respect, sound judgment, civic courage and the ability to command and to obey.

To summarize here: In the sphere of education, there are always two parties to be considered, the parents and the State. If the home is to be preserved, the efforts of parents on behalf of the child must not be disregarded. It falls to the State, however, to integrate education with its general social aims. The school is the most important instrument for raising morale and for setting a tone which will make for stability in future generations. It is also a means of preventing social discontent by regulating the capacities developed in the individual to the opportunities open for their exercise. If, as I have held throughout this book, the oscillations of the social process are due to the expansion and contraction of social opportunity stimulating the over-develop-

ment followed by the frustration of individuality, then a planned economy is of assistance in enabling the State to even out these oscillations by planning also the development of individuality.

### *Towards Social Stability*

In the circumstances of the moment there appears to be before the legislator a single choice on every question that might come up for discussion—whether the power of the State is to be used to encourage individuality or collectivity, differentiation or uniformity, hierarchy or equality. The present tendency, if left to follow uncontrolled the blind drift of events, would undoubtedly move towards the creation of a mass of characterless and standardized men, increasingly deprived of initiative and divested of their last personal responsibilities by an omnipotent central power. But the individual might also be given the chance to win back the independence which guarantees his freedom. This has been the aim of every suggestion so far made in this chapter. The problem is to eliminate the traits of conformity and aggression in favour of the traits of independence and co-operation, and to transform society from a uniform mass without local ties into differentiated individuals properly integrated with their milieu.

Any policy which implies will and foresight is clearly more difficult to follow than one which waits upon events. In so far as the policy here suggested conforms superficially to the desires of the population for security and authority, it is capable of winning a certain support. But in other respects it would be unpopular. For it implies a certain discipline of that excessive individualism which has grown up, and which nobody, whether worker or capitalist, will desire to see pruned. The capitalist clings to his right to do as he likes and enjoys his irresponsible background position; the worker does not want to submit to a master and prefers pampering by the State to independence. Reforms that aim at the general welfare seldom find favour with any particular person, for each has a vested interest in his own bad style of behaviour. Even politicians have a vested interest in their career. They are interested in pleasing their constituents, in keeping public attention focused upon themselves, in stirring up the spirit of insecurity and all the other emotions which make people susceptible to their manipulations.

Much therefore depends upon the chance accident of finding statesmen sufficiently great to seize the moment, ones who are capable of viewing problems as a whole, though wise enough not to apply their solution wholesale; who are ready, where necessary, to use circuitous means to their goal without losing sight of the goal itself; who know how to apply the popular and inevitable portions of their policy in order to reach other and still more valuable ends which are too far beyond the horizon of the average mind to be understood or appreciated by their contemporaries.

It ought also to be asked, I think, whether it would ever be in the interests of the rulers to apply such a policy. It must be granted that, in the short view, it is all too convenient for rulers to have beneath them a public without independence, easily manipulated by bribes and threats, and capable, because of its aggressive nature, of being quickly whipped up into a warlike frenzy against foreign rivals. Yet under such a system there can be no contenting the populace by concessions; each bribe must be bigger than the last, each threat and punishment more ruthless, until the end is reached of a small oligarchy completely divorced from the servile and greedy masses, an oligarchy that lives from hand to mouth, daily becoming more irresponsible in its use of despotic power and more cynical and corrupt at the sight of the worthlessness of the human material it directs. An oligarchy which corrupts others must itself suffer corruption, and, as Aristotle indicated, it will always have in its ranks some ambitious demagogue who seeks the aid of the masses in overthrowing it in order to set himself up as the sole tyrant.

Therefore, once more, I hold that no system of government which neglects individual worth has any real future. Odd as it may seem at first sight, I believe that it is important for the oligarchy, which at present exists in a rather embryonic state, to drop all self-deception as to its true nature and to recognize itself as a compact group with common interests. For self-recognition breeds desire for survival, and the determination to survive inspires those long-term policies which ensure stability to the State. An oligarchy which is concerned to assure for itself a long reign must aim at driving its roots deep into the soil of the people. It must not seek to degrade those beneath it into a uniform mass, after the manner of all tyrannous government, but to establish that unequal hierarchy of status and privilege

by which life mounts continually to the topmost branches of the social order. It must seek to content the individual, revive the framework of his institutions, and ally itself with tradition. Its ultimate hope will be to turn itself into a new aristocracy, just as it must be the ultimate hope of the dictator to found a royal dynasty.

It is only by building towards the permanent stable power of aristocracy that we shall be able to recreate our tradition. Man needs this tradition as surely as he needs bread; it is the basis of his sense of security. Tradition, as Hobhouse has remarked, performs for the social organism the function which heredity performs for the individual. "It furnishes the prescribed rule for dealing with the ordinary occasions of life, which is for the most part accepted without enquiry and applied without reflection."<sup>1</sup> It provides each new generation with the equivalent of an instinct.

We must cease to regard aristocracy through the eyes of democratic prejudice as nothing but a class of nobles oppressing a population of poor serfs; it is an outlook on life, a set of values permeating all classes, from the highest to the lowest. We must also abandon, with our other democratic prejudices, that against tradition. It has been one of the fundamental objections to democracy that it ignores the importance of tradition. It regards government as resting upon rational persuasion rather than upon inherited prejudice, upon the wavering and momentary will of the majority rather than upon a much deeper, if unexpressed, acceptance. But in no case does the popular will, as shown through a vote, furnish a sufficiently solid basis for government; it must always be reinforced by tradition and prescription. Even more important for society is the fact that any disorientation from the past means a corresponding disorientation towards the future. No individual builds his life upon a logical plan, and still less can any multitude of individuals, such as constitute a democratic community formulate for itself by rational consent an objective towards which to strive. Objectives are not "thought out"; they are set by the tendencies which have evolved from the past. Our present impatience with tradition results from a misconception as to its true nature, from a failure to see that if, in our dissatisfaction with the present and our ambition to build some new Utopia, we make *tabula rasa* of the past, we likewise cut ourselves off from the future.

<sup>1</sup> *Social Evolution and Political Theory*, p. 34.

*Towards World Stability*

Planning, as Litvinov used to say of peace, is "indivisible". A national plan which guarantees the workers' security can have no chance to mature save within the framework of a larger plan which guarantees the nation's security. If we wish to rid ourselves of the tyrannical use of State power at home we must at the same time rid ourselves of its anarchical use in international affairs. At present it is becoming more and more manifest that production is carried on, not for use, nor even primarily for profit, but for power. Industry in every country is only incidentally directed towards the creation of consumer's goods; its real end and aim is the creation of more producer's goods. Every country now prefers machines to butter, for without machines a nation feels itself the helpless victim of more predatory powers. The threat of war decides even the kind of industry encouraged, the engineering trade being fostered for the sake of the tanks and aeroplanes which it can turn out and the chemical trade because it can manufacture explosives and poison gas. Thus, as long as the present state of insecurity persists, nations will aim at maximum production rather than at optimum production. It will be impossible to build up a balanced economy, and the wild scramble for markets and raw materials which leads to war will continue.

Fortunately, the Will to Power, extolled by Nietzsche, and taken for granted by men like Hobbes and Machiavelli, is not a normal and inevitable psychological "drive", but an over-compensation for loss of worth. Power over people and things holds interest for human beings because it heightens the feeling of worth, and power politics reach their present pitch of frenzy only against a background of personal insecurity and insignificance. Reforms therefore begin at home. If it is true that stability and security at home depends upon a sane world order, it is equally true that a sane world order could only be brought into existence by countries which feel themselves internally stable and secure. Nations, like individuals, require pruning, and they are not disposed to relish the fact. It is demanded of them that they abandon altogether that individualism which has hitherto characterized their conduct, and subordinate not only their foreign but their home policies to a common endeavour. Each must bend its efforts to eliminating the discontent among its

own people instead of simply projecting this discontent into the world arena.

Apart from these generalities, the most immediate hope for the future seems to lie in the unification of Europe. It is true that all those links of race, language and tradition which might have encouraged voluntary agreement have been severed by a century or more of peculiarly intense individualism. But against this must be set the fact that the Continent has outgrown the existing national boundaries economically, and that the recognition of this point has long been fostering a wider conception of patriotism. The cause of Europe will also be strengthened by the adherence of Great Britain, whose prospects of survival in an anarchic, competitive world are exceedingly ominous. As matters now stand, England, in helping to crush Germany, has raised up, East and West of her, two infinitely more powerful States, who threaten by their mutual rivalry to tear her internal life to pieces. England, ironically enough, has arrived at the position from which Germany was so desperately striving to break out, and her interest in creating a continental unity as a protection to her own independence is very much the same.

The economic problems of Europe are now too deep to be solved by merely political alliances. The power of any modern State lies in its industrial capacity, which in turn depends upon the size of its territory and population. Russia and the United States owe their supremacy to the scale on which their possession of vast and unified home markets allows mass-production methods to be developed. A union of Europe upon the superficial level, where separate States remain with divided home markets and small-scale methods of production, would never have the strength necessary to ensure independence. It would never be much stronger than its strongest component, round whom the smaller satellites would cluster for protection. No union would be worth attempting which did not aim at co-ordinated control of international posts, communications, tariffs, banking, and coinage, and which did not possess its own courts of law and a militia sufficient to maintain itself against any likely combination of dissentients.

Unity, if it is to last, must not only be a protection from something, but for a positive purpose. A unity achieved in the face of a severe threat may fall to pieces again should the threat relax. For Europe to-day, the only objective on which a perma-

next federation could be built seems to lie in the exploitation of Africa. A share in this exploitation is the appetizing bait which could be used to draw the nations into a Western Pact, and the readiness to share with these nations does not seem too heavy a price for the powers already in possession to pay when the alternative is the decay of Europe and of themselves.

Africa is Europe's natural kitchen garden. By modern standards it is almost virgin land. The nineteenth century form of extensive exploitation merely turned over its surface, but in the new intensive phase the Continent could really be made to yield up its treasures. With our present powerful machinery for driving roads and railways through jungles and for draining malarial swamps, with our aeroplanes, radio-communication, refrigerating systems, canned foods and air-conditioned houses, the climate of Africa no longer offers the obstacle it did to European colonization. Africa is capable of absorbing all Europe's surplus of goods, capital and population; it can give employment to its productive capacities and a field for its energies for years to come. In a time when the foundation of our economic life is changing from coal and steam-power to electricity generated by the automatic water-turbine, Africa really comes into its own. "The availability of water-power for producing energy", writes Mr. Mumford, "changes the potential distribution of modern industry throughout the planet and reduces the peculiar industrial dominance that Europe and the United States held under the coal-and-iron régime. For Asia and South America are almost as well endowed with water-power—over fifty million horse-power each—as the older industrial regions, and Africa has *three times as much* as either Europe or North America."<sup>1</sup>

It is not to be supposed that the unification of Europe on the lines suggested will solve the question of war. The exploitation of Africa or the exploitation of any other land is not a permanent solution to economic problems; at most it provides a favourable interval for the creation of those psychological readjustments which would be impossible as long as the nations remain paralysed, disunited, without hope and without other outlet for their internal contradictions than civil strife. Politically, however, the unification of Europe tends towards peace. With industrial resources which, if employed as a whole, are equal to

<sup>1</sup> L. Mumford: *Technics and Culture*, p. 222 (my italics).

those of the United States, it is clear that a Euro-African Federation stretching from the North of Scotland to the Cape of Good Hope forms a solid neutral bloc dividing East and West, one of immense potential power, and the necessary third element in any world-balance. Again, the unification of Europe is desirable culturally. Europe is a storhouse of history and tradition, the source of all the arts, all the inventions, all the ideals which have come to predominate in the world at large. It still shines with a motley brilliance of its own and its decay would mean a serious impoverishment to the younger nations growing up around it.

Nationalism, once divorced from individualism and subject to proper integration, is by no means hostile to the creation of a sense of "Good Europeanism". Pride in the nation to which one belongs, and the fostering of that variety of traditions which have grown up in the separate States are essential ingredients in any larger unity. Just as local patriotism to family, village or shire is the basis of national unity, so national patriotism can and must become the basis of European unity. One would not wish to eradicate the special standpoints of the various nations in order to impose a cosmopolitan anonymity, but rather to make each proud of the contribution to the cultural and historical tradition of Europe which it has made in the past, and to stimulate yet further the sense of emulation between them. We need hierarchy and difference between nations in exactly the same way as we do between individuals.

### *Consolidation or Decay?*

If war could be avoided and the competition between nations could die down, so that industry could be reformed along the lines of optimum production for use instead of the present maximum production for power, an era of consolidation might be expected to follow. No doubt, because the former religious beliefs and cultural values have been reduced by industrialism to a secondary position, we should have to reconcile ourselves to a certain impoverishment of our spiritual life. We have passed through the divine and the heroic stages of the civilization, and our place is in that human stage, dominated by the juristic ideal of the individual, which came to expression at the Reformation and which flourished thereafter so exuberantly on

the new possibilities opened out by the machine. We are living in a period of turmoil due to the contraction of these possibilities, and our most obvious task is to establish a new order and stability on the basic facts of that contraction. Once individuality has been successfully adjusted to the new limitations, man need no longer be obsessed by the sense of frustration or subject to humiliating moods of impotence alternating with ugly outbursts of temper.

In many respects, the twentieth century appears to be attaining an outlook radically different from that of the nineteenth, and of all that have gone before. The political ideal of the phase which is passing was liberty, and its outlook was atomistic and mechanical; the political ideal of the phase which is beginning will more likely be justice, with an outlook which is integrative and purposive. The State will not appeal to the catchwords of reason and utility, but to those of tradition and prescribed order, and the individual will not be romantic and subjective, but empirical and realist. Following the eclecticism of the last century, this age may be truly synthetic. It cannot but be sceptical at heart, for its standards will be broadened by the polyglot nature of the civilization and its vision will have been enriched by the heightened self-consciousness acquired in the course of our present troubles. Its outstanding men are not likely to be great artists, great innovators, great creators, but at least they may claim that they are great organizers. Inheritors of vast concerns, owners of combines whose ramifications extend to all quarters of the globe, manipulators of whole populations and governors of continents, they will require for their work principally the administrative virtues of sobriety, sagacity and severity which the Imperial Romans displayed. Nor is the groundwork for the cultivation of these virtues entirely lacking, for the Protestant spirit, in its austerity and independence, is not unlike the spirit of the early Republic, and it has been further trained by the cautious objectivity of the scientist and by the calculating realism of the money-makers. This century, supposed to be that of the "common man", has, on the contrary, already been rich in the production of the most extraordinary figures, and when the disorders which have given these their opportunity have died down, strong personalities will still be required for the control of men.

The manufacturers of the nineteenth century knew how to

make money, but not how to spend it, and treated themselves and those about them with a singular meanness. There is no reason why the rulers of tomorrow, however sober, should copy the parsimonious habits of their grandfathers, and it is indeed to be hoped that their prestige will require the support of a luxurious style of living. For it is on the basis of their patronage alone that we can look forward to any revival of the arts, even though these arts, at their best, may have more of the quality of the Colosseum than of the Parthenon. We shall have to reckon with the fact that men in general will be devoted henceforth more to practical affairs than to spiritual adventures and that they are not likely to suffer from any overdose of intellect or imagination. Leadership, administrative capacity, trained efficiency at the job on hand will be the qualities chiefly in demand. Men will be the glad and capable executives of those in authority, and will be prepared to accept ready-made the ideas and ideals laid before them, provided that these are convenient working tools. Action is undoubtedly the panacea by which this civilization can relieve itself of the morbid subjective features which distort the psychology of our own period.

One may also hope that order may bring some revival of institutional religion. During the previous century the Catholic Church had to contend not only with scientific materialism, its open and avowed enemy, but with the more insidious influence of democratic liberalism, whose Protestant insistence upon private judgment was fatal to its doctrine of submission and obedience. The Church could now preach, with more assurance that it will be understood, the vanity of mere material aims and the evils of a *laissez-faire* which treated the individual as a means rather than as an end, and it can uphold for political society the same ideal of a planned, conservative hierarchy upon which its own organization is founded. If, as is likely, people become slowly sickened of politics and disillusioned with the cheap, extraverted goals of success and quantity, they may rediscover that the Church is the only organization in a standardized world which takes each individual as separate and unique and affords him the opportunity to work out his own salvation irrespective of social position. The recent obsession with economic security might develop in time into a deeper craving for spiritual security and the comfort of a fixed dogma. As the life of man becomes more petty, his need increases for the assurance

that he does not live in vain, and as the dimensions of his home on this planet seem to shrink, the infinities in which it rolls seem to expand. However sceptical of religion the rulers may remain, they have need of it for government, while the average man cannot long exist with his craving for certainty unsatisfied. Indeed, there is truth in the old assertion that a civilization begins to decline when its religious ideal ceases to be believed. Religion is the highest form of the quest for significance. Its function is to raise men's thoughts to the contemplation of the ultimate problems of his existence, and, once his curiosity concerning these dies away, he moves on a lower level, contenting himself with pettier aims and more meretricious forms of compensation.

If the present state of competition and war were to be indefinitely perpetuated, we can conceive of a different and not so pleasant end. Institutions would not be stabilized and it might even become impossible to keep the debased individual properly incorporated in his society, so that a sort of proletarization would result. War is so tempting to this society because it is the highest test, not so much of personal heroism, as of that capacity for organization on which it prides itself. Even to-day, a great invasion is organized upon a scale so magnificent and with such minuteness of detail and precision of timing as to compel our admiration. War, which serves the harsh mechanical extension of civilization, can be a sign of spiritual impoverishment, the only goal left once nothing further is being created inwardly in the shape of art and ideals. Its result is to perpetuate those violent and exhausting fluctuations, both political and economic, which we have known in our own day, and which, although they are more or less self-righting, produce doubt as to the validity of the social order, accelerate the dynamics of change, and probably shorten the civilization's expectation of life. As I pointed out in an earlier chapter, war is apt to bring a concentration of industrial power in certain victorious monopoly nations, while great masses, even entire peoples, are pensioned off to become a surplus and dependent army of idlers, who speedily lose their social roots and are satisfied with an empty, hedonistic, day-to-day existence. The creation of a proletariat of this sort—a true, parasitical proletariat and not the oppressed class of Marxian description—is perhaps a sign that the civilization is narrowing its scope and throwing off its unwanted elements into barbarism.

A society in decay seems to be composed more and more of mere persons, who have, of course, their personal characteristics, but who do not conform to a definite *style* of individuality, such as a vigorous culture sets for its members. We have noticed, in describing Christian and Renaissance culture, just how powerful and pronounced this integrating style can be. We can compare these periods to what we know of the Empires of the decadence, with their prevailing agnosticism, their repetitive art and their populations which are little more than the objects of an efficient administrative routine. Those who live in such times of decadence are under little pressure from their environment to live up to any definite standards; neither, in consequence, do they feel any particular urge to break away. Their strivings in both directions are weaker, and the social tension is relaxed. Those oscillations between conformity and anarchy described in this book—which, if they are a symptom of frustration, are at least a sign of life—probably die down in the atmosphere of exhaustion by which they are followed.

It may be said that we are far from any such state of affairs. But the problem of man's growing mediocrity and rootlessness, dealt with in these pages, at least points in a dangerous direction. If the individual were ever to feel himself once for all to have no particular place or function in a society which he also felt to have no particular goal or meaning, decay could not be far off. The longevity of a civilization depends upon the maintenance of its goal, and the quest for the significance afforded by a goal is the basis of man's psychology, whether personal or collective. Significance is that which, in work, in sex, in his relations with society, man strives to attain. Its loss is the origin of his frustration and its restoration is the foundation of his content. Faced by the great question-mark of existence, it is of our significance which the religious teacher assures us. The philosopher gropes after it through the painful processes of logic, the mystic tries to seize it by intuition and the artist to apprehend it in the sensuous forms of nature. Man and his society have no predestined wherefore or whither. Man will always be a walker in an unknown country, who himself plants the signposts by which he is guided. Such signposts are his every achievement, every work of civilization which he has created to give to his life its worth and its meaning.



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